THE FULFILLING OF THE SCRIPTURE,

OR

An Essay shewing the Exact Accomplishment of the Word of God in his Works of Providence, performed & to be performed.

For confirming the Beleevers, and Convincing the Atheists of the present time:

Containing in the End a few rare Histories of the Works and Servants of God in the Church of Scotland.

THE SECOND EDITION.

Corrected, and enlarged with several *Additions* both Doctrinall and Historicall.

All the Additions have this Mark (¶) *before and after.*

Also an APPENDIX is added in the end, and an *Index* at the beginning.

Isai. 46: ver. 10. *My Counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.*
John 10: v. 35. — *And the Scripture cannot be broken.*
Act. 1 ver. 16. *Men & Brethren, This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled.* —

Printed in the Year 1671.

231
F598F

READER,

It is like you may expect some accompt anent the rise and occasion of this discourse, that on so great, and weighty a subject so smal an *Essay* should venture abroad, especially in a time, when it seemeth more safe, and prudent to keep silence, to be swift to hear, and slow to speak, which seldome hath an after challenge; the Author will say litle for his apology herein, though he hopeth, he may finde it more easy to satisfy others, then he did himself. this fredome onely he shall take to confesse, that sometime it hath been matter of earnest, yea hath caused some tossing, and exercise upon his spirit, and pressed a more serious enquiry, and search, with a respect to his own case, to be perswaded anent the Scriptures divine authority, that Godlines is not an empty name, or shadow, but of an undoubted truth, which indeed of all other things is the greatest, and of most near concernment; and truely anent that, this grave convincing argument of the Scriptures certain accomplishment, hath not onely oft stared him in the face, with a satisfying discovery, and impression thereof, as a most quieting, and unanswerable demonstration of the truth, but

538468

he must also say, that by very remarkable confirmations from the Lord, this hath been so convincingly witnessed to his experience, as leaveth him under engagement (were such a poor testimony of weight) to put his seal to the Word, that it falleth not to the ground, neither doth the promise of God fail.

It is a dark time now with the Church of Christ, which we see every where almost suffering and afflicted, whilest the whole earth besides seemeth to be at ease, Christians also even beyond others, in their privat lot, trysted with very sharp tryals, though I think suffering may be the least of our fear at this day, while Atheisme doth now appear on so formidable a grouth, and hath a more threatning aspect then the rage, or violence of men: we see a sad decay likewise on the Churches abroad; Religion every where under a great consumption, & wearing out, that seemeth to have reached it in its vital parts, men search after an unusual way of sinning, as if they scorned to be wicked at a common and ordinary rate, prejudice easily taken up and entertained against the way of God, whilest the good man doth, alace! perish, without any affecting observation thereof, the choise, and excellent of the earth pluckt away, and none to fill their roome; Christians burials now frequent, but the birth, and in bringing of such to the Church rare. This is indeed a sad subject and

ſo much the ſadder that few are found whoſe eye affecteth their heart, whoſe teares, and groaning ſeem to anſwer ſuch a ſtroke, and ruin which now is like to fall under our hand, but I ſhall leave this; prayer will be the beſt cure, and is this day more fit, then complaining, to turn unto him who ſeeth the wayes of his People that he may heal them, and can prevent theſe with mercy, who ſeem leaſt fit for the ſame; onely two or three ſad remarks of this time, I cannot altogether paſſe, which indeed are ſtrange ſymptomes of the Churches preſent caſe, and diſtemper. 1. To ſee men own the doctrine of ſanctification, who yet can profeſſedly diſown, yea, make it their work by reproach to beget a prejudice againſt the practice thereof, Oh ſtrange! to finde ſuch as will dip their pen in gall againſt a tender and ſtrict walk in Religion, and revile it in the power thereof, whileſt they doe not deny theſe truths, and principles that neceſſarily oblige to ſuch a tender practice; who in the moſt grave concerning dutyes of Chriſtianity think it enough to charge their brethen with Phariſaical oſtentation, and hypocriſy, whileſt they muſt confeſſe theſe duetyes to be unqueſtionably binding, and that they can be no competent judges of ſuch a challenge, which the great vvitnes of the heart and invvard parts of of men can onely determine. 2. It is a ſad remark alſo of the time that Proteſtant vvriters, profeſ-

50348

ſing

sing the Reformed Religion, shall state themselves in opposition to the most concerning grounds thereof, such as imputed righteousnes, and justification by faith, vvhich are vvell called *Articulus stantis et cadentis Ecclesiæ.* I cannot have that charity, that it is from ignorance, but from a height of malice, that some of late reproach the Protestant doctrine, in this great fundamental of justification, as if it presled beleeving and resting upon Christ vvithout respect to vvorks and holines; I confesse, vve put not inherent righteousnes in the room of imputed, though we assert each is necessary in their own place, the one in order to our right, the other in order to our actual and full possession of that right, yea, that holines is absolutly necessary not only *necessitate precepti*, *sed medii*, and justifying faith doth necessarily require works, *sed non qua*, *et quatenus justificat*, but sure, if these men grant we are justifyed by the satisfaction of Christ, they must needs confesse it is by imputation, since if the debtour be acquit by the cautioners payment, is it not by the imputation thereof to him? O sad! to see some put their invention upon the rack how to wound the Church (yea, a death wound it would be if they could reach their end) in the great truth of imputed righteousnes, but it were best they denyed that sixt ver. of the 4. Ch. to the Rom. to be canonick Scripture, which none can read and shist, it being so clear, that the blesse-

m

man is there held forth, *who whom God imputeth righteousnes without works*, sure that cannot be inherent righteousnes, else it were *contradictio in adjecto*. I professe these what ever they pretend, I must look on as adversaryes to the Reformed Churches, and there is nothing more dangerous then a pirat going forth under a counterfut flag. 3. Is it not likewise sad, yea, astonishing to see Ministers now in these times, who are the expresse Embassadors of Christ given to the Church for her edification, stand so directly crosse to the very end of their work and Ministry, many of whom may be said that knowingly, and deliberatly they oppose piety, that such should persecute, whose work is to feed, and wound in stead of healing, grieve the spirit of the Godly, who should be helpers of their joy, that none are a greater plague to corrupt the Church, and cause the sacrifice of the Lord be abhorred, then some of these who should be the salt of the earth, yea, none more obstruct the treaty of the Gospel, betwixt Christ and his Church, then Ministers who are called the friends of the bridgroom: Oh, what a strange and astonishing contradiction may this seem, but it should be no reproach to that holy, and excellent calling of the Ministry, for of such the Scripture hath expresly warned. I confesse it may be said no Atheist like an unsanctified Minister, yea, no Atheisme of so black a dye as theirs, who being still enured with holy things have yet no sense thereof.

Now in this very dark houre, wherein the Church ſeemeth to have fallen in a death like pang; and oh many of her Children in a ſad lethargie, that if we looked in an ordinary way, her wound might ſeem incureable, there are two great & concerning Quæries that I think should much take us up. The one is to know what the Scripture ſpeaketh to the Church, what ſolid ground of encouragement is there held forth, for truely if we had not that ſure teſtimony of the Word, we might fear Religion should quite wear out, & truth perish from the earth, but doth the Scripture ſpeak peace? all then is well; that O that is ſufficient ſecurity to put the Churches hope beyond further debate, though men should threaten, though the earth were overturned, & the foundation shaken, this is a determination above men, above all the rules of humane policy, yea, above the ſtars, which fruſtrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad, even that revealed Counſel of God, taking place anent his work and People.

I know ſome grave writers of theſe late times, doe expreſſe their fear that the horrid wickedneſſe and apoſtacy of the Gentile Church may at laſt reſolve in the Lords departure and an univerſal darknes, that as the rejection of the Jewes made way for the Gentiles incoming, ſo their fall may as remarkably preceede that ſolemn return and reſtauration of the Jewish Church; it is alſo become the fear of many that Popery may yet

once

once overrun the whole Reformed Churches before Antichriſt fall: but ſince theſe ſad thoughts, nor any appearance of the time, are no part of our Bible, we ſhould learn neither to ſtretch our fears nor expectations, beyond that which the Scripture warranteth, and if the Lord be God, and this his very word, let us adhere to it and wait for its accompliſhment. A ſecond Quere which is indeed no leſſe concerning in ſuch a time, may be anent *Duety*, what ſo eminent an hazard of the Church, and this great decay of Chriſtianity doth moſt preſſingly call for, but this is a ſubject which requireth another pen, and too large, to touch with a paſſing word, yea, we may ſay the great want of theſe dayes is not anent the diſcovery of duety, but of the practice of known, and diſcovered duetyes, for the Scripture giveth a certain and diſtinct ſound in the darkeſt time, and hath not left us to doubtful enquiries and debate in this matter, I ſhall therefore leave it with a few things onely to be in the general conſidered. 1. It is ſure, that every time hath its preſent duety, and the wiſe diſcerners thereof will know thence what they ought to do, what work and ſervice the preſent circumſtances of that time call for, ſhall the earth have its ſeaſons wherein things are beautiful, ſhall the ſtork and ſwallow know their time, and yet Chriſtians not know how to bring forth fruit in their ſeaſon, & diſcern the ſpecial time and opportunity of duety?

ty? .2 It is alſo ſure, that every Chriſtian in what ſoever capacity or condition, as he hath his meaſure and talent, ſo hath ſome work and opportunity of duety, wherein they may ſerve the Lord in their generation, yea, it is not the meaneſt lot or condition that ſhutteth that door upon any, that they have no work for God, who deſire to be faithful for him: Oh that in this threatning time when darknes is like to overſpread the Church, it were more upon the heart of Chriſtians to ſtrive together, and contend by a ſerious improvement of their ſeveral capacities to preſerve Religion, and tranſmit the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt to the poſterity, that the Chriſtian parent, or Maſter of family did witnes more that great reſolution in a time when many are drawing back, *but as for me, I and my houſe will ſerve the Lord.* 3. It is found that the moſt eminent and honourable ſervice of the Church doth uſually tryſt her in a low and ſuffering condition, when there hath been but little ſtrength, many outward diſadvantages, then both their call and furniture hath been moſt obſervable, to confeſſe the truth, to endure for the Goſpel of Chriſt, to overcome by the Word of his teſtimony, a piece of ſervice whereto more proſperous times doe not give ſuch an opportunity, yea, it hath been in ſuch a caſe, *Dan.* 11: 32. that theſe who knew their God, were made ſtrong to do exploits. 4. It doth much concern us to put a high value on the truth

truth, in a time when men must either lose it, or buy it, and. O what a choise purchase is that which cannot be bought too dear, the [illegible] rate of our liberty, estate, [illegible] and reputation, yea with the losse of peace when it cometh in competition with it? For it is that great *depositum* once delivered to the Saints, the inheritance of our Children, that way whereby Iesus Christ keepeth intercourse vvith his Bride on the earth, yea, the charter of all our mercies, and of our hope through eternity. 5. Though every line of divine ruth is ineſtimable, yet it is sure there is a more pressing call for our adherence to that truth vvhich is most controverted in the time, for it is the vvord of his patience and the matter of our present testimony, and it is knovvn through all ages vvhat a singular blessing hath followved the contending, and vvitnessing of a fevv for the truth in a spait of publick defection, to keep it alive, vvhen it vvas like to be svvallowed up, yea, to effects above rational beliefe, *unus Athanasius contra totum orbem*, many such remarks have not been wanting. 6. I shall only adde that vvhich is alvvayes necessary and binding, yet vve may say in a time of the Churches hazard and suffering is more pressingly called for, even the study of Christian prudence, a duety convincingly necessary, for regulating of duetyes, according to the circumstances of the Churches case, which doth so nearly concern the intereſt

terest and preservation of Religion, that I must say, a breach in that concord betvvixt zeal and [illegible] prudence, when there is not some equal respect studyed in the exercise of both, cannot but give the Church a sore wound, this is indeed a large theam, but I shall onely point at in three things. 1. In our avoiding and being tender to give offence, not only to keep a distance from evil, but from the smallest appearance thereof, I must say they are bad casuists, and have litle respect to the Churches edification, who make it their work, not so much to keep men from sin, as to shevv them, *quam prope ad peccatum sine peccato accedere liceat*, Ovvhat a becoming fear is that, not to lay a stumbling block in the vvay of others, to grieve the vveake, or confirm such vvho use to found their prejudice against the truth, and vvay of God, upon the miscarriage of such as professe the same. 2. This excellent study of Christian prudence hath a respect to mens taking offence as vvell as their giving it, to our being sober in judging, in personal reflexions, to cover & hide the infirmities of others rather then spread them, even for the Gospels sake, yea, to shut as it vvere our eyes, and cast a mantle on their nakednes, vvho overtaken vvith the violence of some temptation may yet be serviceable to the Church, but especially this should presse us to a vvatchful regard of any breach, and rent in the Church, & to study a healing spirit so far as is possible vvithout

out prejudice to truth. 3. It is alſo a concerning piece of Chriſtian prudence, hovv to vvalk vviſely tovvards theſe vvho are vvithout, vvhen prejudice againſt the vvay of God is novv in ſuch a grouth, to ſtudy hovv vve may convince, gain ground, and by Chriſtianly prudent and tender carriage conciliat reſpect to the truth, and thus commend holines, and theſe vvho profeſſe it to the conſcience of men, to ſtudy that rule of expediency much in things of themſelves vvarrantable, vvhat fitnes, and advantage, preſent circumſtances may offer, or deny for edification, and promoting that great intereſt of the Goſpel in our converſe vvith men.

I ſhall novv ceaſe to trouble you further, onely vvould premit ſome fevv things vvith a reſpect to the ſubject of this follovving eſſay. 1. Should vve not vvith vvonder and aſtonishment look on this great record of the Scripture? by vvhich the glorious Majeſty of God doth ſpeak to men, yea doth as certainly communicat his Counſel and minde, vve may ſay more certainly, then if vve had an immediat audible voice from Heaven, O could vve have ſuch ordinary thoughts of this, if vve conſider hovv near God cometh therein to us? I think if there vvere but one corner of the earth, though in the remoteſt parts, vvhere men might go and get a look of ſo vvonderful, and important a thing as Gods expreſſe vvill vvritten and ſent from Heaven to the earth,

earth, anent our duety here, and bleſſednes for ever, should we not think it worth our croſſing the ſea, and of the greateſt expence of time or labour? it is truely a wonder how we can read and conſider the Scripture, without wondring. 2. It is a great concernment to know that the Scripture hath ſuch a witnes as experience, and that there is ſuch a trade, and correſpondence as this betwixt the Saints and the Word, which lieth not in the common road of the World. O what an empty thing should Religion be if it had not this word *experience* in its grammar, that ſecret & ſure mark whereby the Chriſtian knoweth the Scripture is of God, how thus the Lord hath oft ſealed their inſtruction in a dark plunge; how life and power, inlivening influences, to the melting of their heart, have oft tryſted them there in a very dead frame; and now they know that verily God heareth prayer, now they are perſwaded, and have learned by the croſſe that he is indeed a comforter, yea, many can shew how by the Word their firſt acquaintance with the Lord did begin, how ſome particular truth, like a pickle of corn thrown in at their heart, by the bleſſing of the great husbandman was made to take life, and grow. 3. It much concerneth us to know what an excellent key the Scripture is to unlock that ſealed book of providence, and that no other key can fit the ſame, many have tried another way but loſt themſelves on the ſearch, and

the

the more they preſt by humane wiſdome, they became the more dark. I truely think there is not a more ſatisfying diſcovery within time, then this, to trace divine truth back until we ſee its firſt breaking forth out of his eternal decree and council who is the author thereof, how thence it taketh hold of the word which is the adequate ſign, and declaration of his purpoſe, and then how the vvord taketh hold of his vvork and providence, vvhere vve may ſee the face, and condition of the Church clearly vvritten out through all the changes of time, hovv providence keepeth a certain and ſteady courſe even amidſt the moſt perplexed motions and reelings of the earth, yea, hovv all things even theſe vvhich vvould ſeem moſt contradictory, run vvithin that ſtraight channel of the vvord, and cannot go vvithout theſe bounds. 4. It is the principal, and moſt concerniug Scripture-promiſes, that are onely touched in this followving diſcourſe, theſe vvhich carry along vvith them a clear continued ſeries of the Churches condition through time, and shevv the moſt remarkable changes of her lot, for it is clear that in diverſe prophecies and in a different manner the Spirit doth point at one & the ſame thing: and truely it should cauſe no miſtake or prejudice, that vve finde ſeveral of the Scripture prophecies expreſt in ſuch dark termes, ſince the vviſdome of God ſavv it fit that for a time theſe truths should be locked up, and ſealed; but novv light hath

hath ſo far broken up with the event, as we may ſee how very ſignificant and ſuitable to the matter theſe moſt dark ænigmatick termes are. 5. We would upon no accompt ſhut our eares where the Scripture is clear, and giveth us ground to wait that the outgoings of the Lord for his people in their deliverance, and for the deſtruction of his enemies now in theſe laſt times, ſhall be very glorious, yea by ſome ſtately and ſtupendious acts of providence that he ſhall accomplish his judgement on Antichriſt: neither muſt we take a prejudice at truth, becauſe of the wilde fancyes of many who would extend it beyond its bounds, or that near reſemblance which the errour of ſome in this time may ſeem to have thereto, for that hath been an old ſtratagem of the Devil to prejudge the World at ſome of the truths of God, by ſetting up a counterfut thereto. I ſhall adde no more, onely what accompt is given upon the cloſe of the laſt argument of ſome remarkable paſſages of providence in the late times, as herein the author hath ſome confidence to profeſſe he did endeavour what could be attained for certainty of the ſame, and if any circumſtance of theſe relations ſhould be found a miſtake, he dare ſay before Him who is greater then our conſcience it was not the neglect of ſerious inquiry, ſo he muſt alſo premit, the inſerting of them was upon no further intent, then to be a witnes to that truth of *the Lords eminent appearance for his Church in the laſt dayes:* it would be of great uſe and profit to the Church that ſome more fitly qualified would ſtudy a more large collection of this kinde. O that this might go forth with a bleſſing from him who by the meaneſt things can ſerve himſelf and promote the edification of his Church, and that the Lord would raiſe ſome up with much of his Spirit to make a further ſearch and enquiry in this great and weighty truth.

INDEX.

INDEX.

THE grave ſubject of the Scriptures accomplishment conſidered in ſome ſpecial truths, previouſly held forth for giving light to the ſame. Pag. 1, 2
What is thereby to be underſtood, in nine Particulars opened up. 2
The verification of the Scripture, conſidered as the Lords peculiar work, and deſign in the World, & in the whole conduct of providence. 7
How clear and manifeſt this great truth is. 12
That this, notwithſtanding of clear demonſtrative evidences of the ſame, is hid from the moſt of men, and a great myſtery to them. 16
What an unanſwerable witnes, and argument the fulfilling of the Scripture is of it's divinity to ſatisfy and quiet the ſoul thereanent. 23
That it is a moſt ſolacing, and ſingularly delectable truth. 27
How much the Godly are concerned, now in theſe latter times to ſtudy the fulfilling of the Scripture, and what advantage they have for the ſame beyond former ages. 33
How weighty a duty it is, & on what preſſing grounds it lyes at each Chriſtians doore. 38
Five Arguments ſet down, whence this truth is in the following treatiſe clearly demonſtrated. 42

First Argument.

THe *firſt Argument* from the ſolid, and ſure experience of the Godly in all ages, doth witnes the real performance of the Scripture. 43
A particular following out of this, in *five Inſtances*. 46
1. That there is a contrariety betwixt the flesh and the ſpirit, witneſſed by Chriſtian experience, as clearly as it is held forth in the Scripture. 46

2. *Instance*, of the deceitfulnes of mans heart, with that witnes given in from experience thereto. 48
3. *Instance*, That there is an invisible adversary without, as clear and discernable, as that there is corruption within. 51
4. *Instance*, Shews that real intercours betwixt a Christian and the promises of the word by sure experience, and how clearly this may be demonstrat. 54
Some previous considerations, for our right understanding this. 56
A more particular demonstration in ten special promises wherewith the Godly, through their life, have a most usual and continual trade. 59
The first Promise, Considered with respect to our believing and adventuring on the naked word, without any probable appearance of its outmaking, and how clearly this is verified. 59
2. That God hears and answers prayer, from solid experience demonstrated. 62
3. That the powring out of the Spirit, and its sealing, and marvellous power on the soul is no delusion, but certainly known, demonstrat. 65
4. That light and counsel to the Godly, and the directing of their steps, according to the promise is made out to these who commit their way to him. 69
5. The promise of pardon, and forgivenes, how it is sealed by experience. 71
6. The promise of support and encouragement to the Godly under the cross, verified. 74
7. The promise to integrity, and uprightnes in an evil time. 77
8. That the promise of assistance and strength for dutie, is truly made out, and verified. 79
9. This promise of all things working together for their

their good who love God, clearly verified in experience. 82
10. The great gain, and advantage of Godlines, demonstrat according to the promise. 85
5. *Instance*, Holds forth the verification of Scripture threatnings, such under whose reach the Godly may fall. 88
Some things premitted for clearing this. 89
Some special threatnings instanced, with that witnes the experience of Christians, must bear to the same. 90
A rational demonstration of the truth and reality of Godlines, and the validity of that witnes, which the experience of the Saints in all ages, bear to the outmaking of the Scripture, from several grounds held forth. 99
The great import of this argument from experience, in six particulars considered, and what a transport of joy, and wondering, this when it is brought near to our thoughts, may cause. 110

II. Argument.

Second argument Demonstrats the certain accomplishing of the Scripture from the Churches continued observation in all ages. 126
This demonstration in 3 branches followed out.
The first Branch of the argument doth witnes the Scriptures verification, in these promises which concern the universal Church. 127
1. What concerns the Churches continuance, and preservation and how great & marvelous a thing it is demonstrat. 128
2. Her advance and increase, and how in an ordinary way, this could not be without a miraculous, and

supernatural power. 132
3. The promise of the Spirit as it respects the Church, and its accompanying the truth, and doctrine of Christ in all ages, demonstrat from clear evidences thereof. 138
4. How the Lord hath given his Church deliverance in her greatest exigences, according to the promise thereof. 144
5. That comprehensive promise *Rom.* 8. *ver.* 28. with respect to the Church clearly verified, in the observation of each time. 149
Second branch Of the argument demonstrats the fulfilling of these Scripture threatnings, which concern the visible Church. 153
Seven instances held forth, wherein this is made clear. 154
Third Branch of the argument Doth witnes the clear verification of the Scripture, in these passages of providence, which seem to the World darke and astonishing, whereat many are shaken. 163
This demonstration, in 14 instances followed out; how these convincingly verify the Scripture, and are great confirmations of the truth, whereat upon the first appearance we are ready to stumble,
1. That with the first stirrings of the Churches delivery, her straits and trouble seem to increase. 164
2. A serious endeavour for reformation, and to promote the Kingdom of Christ meeting with great interruptions, how it confirms the Scripture. 165
3. How a great overclouding, and darknes on the Church, following remarkable manifestations of the glory, and power of God, doe clearly verify the truth of the word. 167
4. That when judgment comes on a land, it begins first at the best, 169
5. That

5. That ſtrange ſucces, which followes the worſt of men ſometimes in an evil courſe, made clear. 170
6. Theſe diſappointments the Church oft meets with, when ordinary means ſeem moſt promiſing. 171
7. The long continuance of a heavy afflicting rod on the Church, and what a confirmation this is of the word. 172
8. That Satan hath uſually ſuch a counterfit, of any remarkable work of God ſet on foot in a land cleared. 173
9. The abounding of errors, and hereſy under the Goſpel, more then under the old Teſtament how clearly it anſwers the Scripture. 174
10. Theſe great ſtirs, and commotions, that oft attend the Goſpel when it breaks up in power in a land. 176
11. That men of great natural enduements are ſo uſual oppoſers of the truth. 177
12. What ſtrange judgments may befall ſome of the ſaints in their outward lot. 178
13. The groſs falling of ſome, who have ſhined with a great luſtre once in the Church. 179
14. The ſtrange contingency of events in the World, and how this is not at an adventure, but clearly anſwers the Scripture. 179
This further commended to our ſerious ſtudy, and the great concernment thereof held forth, to be obſerving how clearly the Scripture is confirmed, by theſe things, in the way of the Lord and in the adminiſtration of his providence, which ſeem to many grounds of ſhaking, whence they are ready to queſtion the truth. 181
This cleared in ten inſtances more added, whence

the godly should be more strengthned in the truth though they seem at the first look strange. 18
1. That the Church of Christ should be so universally low, when the whole earth besids seems to be at rest. 182
2. The short breathings of the Church, under the new Testament, that we see her lucid intervals usually of so small continuance, and how thus the Scripture is verified. 187
3. The wearing out of life and power in the Church so often with a further increase of light, and how thus the truth is confirmed. 191
4. That the great men of the earth, and these who sit in the place of judgment, are so usually the Churches greatest adversaries. 195
5. That instruments sometime eminently useful in the Church, with the change of times, should be found to change their principles, is a confirming witnes also to the truth. 199
6. Mens personating godlines, and the power hereof at the greatest rate, who on an after discovery are found most gross, how it is no ground for reflecting on the truth, but should confirm it. 204
7. These sad jars and divisions which so frequently are seen within the Church, cleared. 207
8. That the Lords immediat hand may seem more heavy on his Church and people in suffering times then the hand of men, considered. 209
9. To what a strange height a judicial stroke of induration on the spirit of men may come, and how thus the Scripture is confirmed. 21
10. The righteous falling sometime with the wicked in a common judgment, whilst some notorious for wickednes may be seen to goe to the grave in peace, cleared. 21

Index.

III. Argument.

Third Argument, to prove the verification of the Scripture, how to the view and conviction of the World it is undenyably obvious. 218
In 14 Instances demonstrat. 219
1. That man now is fallen from that excellent state wherein once he was formed. 222
2. The truth, and reality of conversion, and how far this marvellous change is above nature, demonstrat. 223
What true cause there is of wondering at this great worke, and how demonstrative an argument it is of the grace of God, and truth of the Scripture, further cleared, with an addition of several evidences more. 226
3. The truth of fellowship here betwixt God, and the soul, and that this is no fancy or delusion, made clear to the World. 233
4. That the righteous is more excellent then his neighbour. 236
5. That the promised encouragement to the Godly under their sufferings for the truth, falls not to the ground. 239
6. That there is a conscience within men, which clearly answers the discovery of the Scripture thereanent. 241
A further demonstration of this truth, & how convincing a witnes this is against Atheism, held forth. 244
7. How clearly it is made out, there is a reward for the righteous. 247
8. That verily there is a God, who judgeth in the earth, demonstrat to the conviction of the World, from several clear grounds. 250
9. That there are evil spirits, and such a diabolical

power as the Scripture holds forth, witneſſed. 259
10. That enmity betwixt the Children of God, & the World held forth, and how great a witnes it is to the truth. 563
11. That the creature is made ſubject to vanity becauſe of ſin, clearly demonſtrat to the World, and the truth of the Scripture therein. 265
12. That the end of the righteous is peace. 271
13. That great truth of the ſouls immortality, & how miſtaken a thing it is conſidered, and demonſtrat from ſome clear undenyable arguments. 274
How great and aſtonishing a truth it is, & what other thoughts men ſhould have thereof were it rightly underſtood. 280
14. That the way of the Lord is perfect, and all his works done in judgment held forth. 282
This demonſtration more particularly followed out; *Firſt* in the whole frame and ſtructure of the viſible Church, 283. 2. In the conduct and adminiſtration of providence about the Church, 287, 3. In the great work and contrivance of redemption, 292. 4. In that marvellous order and diſpoſal of the works of God, through the whole creation, and with what a ſubſerviency all things are framed, and directed to ſome ſpecial end, conſidered. 295

IV. Argument.

FOurth *Argument* demonſtrats the exact accomplishment of the prophetical part of the Scripture, and the ſpecial predictions thereof in theſe periods of time to which they relate. 303
Some things premitted thereanent. 304
1. That prophecy of old by Noach concerning the flood, and its certain taking place held forth. 305
2. How

2. Hou that ſtrange ſtroke, and judgment on men in confounding their languages, hath clearly come to paſſe, according to the Scripture: and how this in an ordinary way could not have been brought about, but the very finger of God unanſwerably manifeſt therein, demonſtrat. 307
3. The fulfilling of that which was prophecied concerning the Churches delivery from Egypt. 311
4. What was promiſed about the Church of Iſraels more full growth clearly made out. 312
5. How the Scripture and Prophecies thereof with reſpect to the declining times of the Jewish Church are verified. 313
6. The exact performance of what by Daniel was foretold concerning the riſe, and fall of the Monarchies. 315
7. That greateſt Prophecy, which is the intent of the whole Scripture of God, *the coming of the Meſſias*, how clearly verified to the World in the appointed time. 316
A rational demonſtration thereof from manifeſt, and undenyable grounds held forth. 317
8. The ſure performance of that remarkable Prophecie of the incalling of the gentils, and how this marvellous work without a divine miraculous power, could not be conceived. 325
9. How clearly that dreadful deſolating ſtroke on the Jews, doth verify what was prophecied thereanent, held forth. 330
10. How manifeſt the coming of Antichriſt, and his being revealed to the World, now is in the event. 334
Some ſerious queries anent this great adverſary held forth, to ſhew what an infatuation theſe muſt be under, who cannot ſee him, when before their

eyes so clearly discovered. 338
The authors judgment humbly offered, anent the number of the beast, and the meaning of the Scripture therein with some grounds for clearing the same. 347
11. What was prophecied anent the killing of the witnesses now made clear in the event. 351
What of the Prophetical part of the Scripture is yet to be accomplished. 353
1. The full ruin of Antichrist and his kingdom. 354
2. The incalling of the Jewes. 358
3. A great flowrishing of the Church both of Jewes and Gentils. 361
4. Satans binding, and the Churches reign with Christ. 365
5. The fall and destruction of the Turkish Empire. 368
6. Satans loosing, and the victory over Gog and Magog. 370

V. Argument.

THat we have already several grounds of confirmation, and pledges in our hand to assure us, that what of the Scripture is to be accomplished shall be certainly fulfilled. 371
1. The very being of the world is a ground. 372
2. These truths that are of all other most strange are already accomplished, as anent the comming of the Messias. 380
3. That Jesus Christ hath begun the war against Antichrist, and the enemies of his Church. 382
4. That the Churches victory over Antichrist is not only begun but in a great measure advanced. 389
Wherein the Lords extraordinary providence is no less discernable then in the first planting of Christianity by the Apostles, proven by seven witnesses.

Index.

1. The wonderful ſucceſs the Goſpel hath had in theſe laſt times. ... 391
2. The Church in theſe laſt times hath met with as ſharp aſſaults of cruel and powerful enemies, as in the primitive times, ſhewed in ſeveral inſtances. 393
3. The wonderful patience, reſolution and chearfulneſs of ſufferers in theſe late times, and inſtances thereof. 395
4. The remarkable judgements of God on oppoſers of his work of Reformation from Antichriſtianiſme, in ſeveral inſtances both forrain and domeſtick. 401
5. The large meaſure of the Spirit that followed the miniſtry of the Goſpel in theſe late times, 414. beſides forrain inſtances, 415, the work in the Weſt of Scotland about the 1625 year, 416. and in Cliddeſdale about 1630 year, 417. and in Irland about 1628 year and thereafter, 418. and in Scotland 1638 year and thereafter, 419. and of *Mr. Welſh* and *Mr Forbes*, 420. and *Mr. Rutherford*. 421
6. That extraordinary Apoſtolick and Prophetick ſpirit, that appeared in ſome miniſters and others raiſed in theſe late times, 422. as in Scotland *Mr Welſh*, 424. *Mr. Robert Bruce*, 429. *Mr Davidſon*, 432. *Mr Patrik Simſon*, 436. *Mr Andro Melvin*. 440. *Hugh Kennedy*, 441. again *Mr Robert Bruce*, 443. *Mr. John Welſh*. 446. *Mr John Scrimger*, 451. *Mr Robert Blair*. 452. the Laird of Raith, 458. *Jacobus Faber in France*, 460. *Mr Andro Stuart*, 462. *Iohn Stuart*, 465
7. Theſe marvellous providences of God confirming the truth ſince the breaking up of the Goſpel, whereof ſeveral rare particulars are mentioned; 472

In

In the Appendix five Inferences.

1. A Christian hath from the fulfilling of the Scripture a great advantage for his establishment. 498

2. There is a special debt on each Christian to bear witness to the faithfulnes of God. 502

3. This debt lieth also on the Church to witness the Lords faithfulnes. 509

4. It is a duty to discern the times, and enquire seriously thereanent. 517. 1. What is the present state of the Church. 518. 2. What the present signs of the time seem to point at, 524. 3. To discern the particular snares and hazards of the time. 534. 4. What at such a time can the righteous do. 541

5. The Scripture truths as they are great and marvellous, they are also in the evidence of their verification so clear and obvious as may convince the greatest Atheist. 549

THere is not one word so misprinted as to procure any difficulty to an understanding Reader. But if any Reader scruple through a letter wanting or one for another. He may Pag. 5. Lin, 10. for same read same. Ibid. l. 29. r. these. p. 19. l. 5. r. this. p. 22. l. 33. r. fervent. p. 30. l. 21. r. the earth. p. 31. l. 19. r. fore. ib. l. 20. r. tree. p. 109. l. 21. r. then. p. 248. dele be. p. 261. l. 29. r. Fairies. p. 278. l. 10. r. exitium. p. 287. l. 19. r. she. p. 298. l. 26. r. doth. p. 305. l. 25. r. may. p. 315. l. 26. r. yea. p. 328. l. 3. it is. p. 332. l. 24. r. revolutions. p. 339. l. 35. r. out. p. 357. l. 24. dele so. p. 360. l. 11. r. people. p. 371. l. 5. read know. p. 374. l. 297. r. præexistence. p. 417. l. 7. read one. pag. 497. l. 7. read lustre.

The

The fulfilling *of the* SCRIPTURE.



Here are two means by which the bleſſed Majeſty of God hath choſen, to reveal himſelf to the ſons of men, his *Word* & his *Works*, which may be called theſe two great Luminaries, for giving light to the Church, though the one be greater, I mean doth more clearly ſhine forth, yea doth communicate light to the other; theſe men muſt not divide, which by ſo ſtrait a tye the Lord hath joined, and by a mervellous correſpondence hath ſet the one over againſt the other, that it may be eaſy to ſee his faithfulneſs, and the *accompliſhment of the Scripture* therein, and indeed this is a great concerning truth,

that calleth for a serious ſtudy, the ſolid perſwaſion of which ſhould affoord a ſweet ground of repoſe, and reſt for the ſoul, though the earth were all in a combuſtion round about, and give a ſatisfying anſwer to our moſt ſollicitous thoughts, and fears: Now this being the intended ſubject of the following diſcourſe, I ſhall firſt touch it a little in the general, and then hold forth ſome more particular grounds, whence it may be clearly demonſtrated.

I. That the *Scripture of God hath a certain accompliſhment here in the World*, and what is to be underſtood by the ſame, I ſhall endeavour to clear in theſe things, which would be conſidered.

1. This is the very unfolding of the Lords decree, and ſecret purpoſe, the bringing forth of his work, now within time, to the view of Angels and Men, which was before him in the deep of his thoughts, and counſel from eternity; it is an opening up of the ſealed book, which we muſt not underſtand to be that ſecret roll of election, and the book of life, wherein the names of the elect are write; but *Liber fatidicus*, the ſealed Book of Gods diſpenſations in the World, ſhewing out his counſels, and deſignes which ſhould be brought forth in the after-ages of time; for as the Lord did fully comprehend what he was to do, and all that was to befal his Church, and People from the beginning to the end, long long before there was a beginnig, before the mountaines were formed, ſo hath he copyed, and written out his heart in the Word hereanent, wherein he hath moſt plainly ſhewed forth, what were his bleſſed purpoſes, and counſel of old, and thus the thoughts of his heart, his Word and his works do ſweetly agree, and each one wonderfully anſwers to another, for his work doth bring forth

forth, and accomplish his Word, that his decree, and counsel from all eternity may take place.

2. The Scriptures accomplishment is the transcript and writing of it over in providence, where we may see and admire how the Word doth shine upon all the pathes and footsteps of the Lord toward his Church in every age, and gives light to the same, and what an evident reflection, his work hath again upon the Word, so that through the whole series and course of providence in the earth, we have a most exact portraiture, and image of the Scripture, answering one to another as face answers to face in the glasse, where it may be easy to discern the copy by the principal, and that resemblance which is betwixt the building, and that excellent pattern, and model, which is held forth thereof in the Word.

3. The accomplishment of the Scripture is the very turning that, which was the object of our faith and contemplation, to be the object of our sense and feeling, it is the real birth, and bringing forth these truths unto the World in their appointed time and season concerning the Church, and particular Christians, which were hid in that womb of the promise, and many dark predictions of the Word; it is such a thing as giveth the promises and Prophecyes, a visible being, yea bringeth truth so near within the reach of our senses, that we may even touch as it were and handle the words of life. O what an excellent interpreter is experience! *Taste and see*, for thus the serious Christian getteth a view of the Scripture, and spiritual things, which the most subtil, and pearcing eye of unsanctified Schoolmen cannot reach, yea, by the practice of truth, nearness to God, and retiring of the soul to him, hath oft got more light in an hour then others by many dayes, putting their

judgement and invention upon the rack.

4. This is Gods own ſeal, which he putteth to the Word to confirm and ratify the ſame, I do not only mean that ſecret ſeal of the Spirit within, but ſomething more external, that ſolemn teſtimony of his workes, whereby he doth every day appeal mens conſciences anent his truth, for his works are very manifeſt, whereon there is ſo clear an ingravening of his truth and faithfulneſs, that as the impreſſe and image of the ſeal is upon the wax, men may alſo ſee whoſe ſuperſcription and image that is, which doth appear on ſuch, and ſuch paſſages of providences.

5. This is ſomething we are not to ſeek onely in the extraordinary acts of providence, or in any ſingular and eminent path of a chriſtian experience, nay it doth shine forth in the ſmalleſt and moſt caſual things that falls out, yea in every Page of that great Volume of Providence may be clearly read.

6. The Scriptures accomplishment is ſuch a thing as concerns every Chriſtian in his perſonal caſe to which his ordinary experience doth relate, whereof theſe have a large regiſter, what of the Word hath been certainly proven in the ſeveral ſteps, and changes of their life, whoſe practice doth much ly betwixt improvement of the Word, and obſervation how it is fulfilled, ſuch can witneſs how under a ſpiritual decay to be carnally minded is death, and when its well, that great peace they have who love Gods Law, they have oft found that in a ſtrait he is a very preſent help, and in the way of duty that its ſurely good to draw near to him, and in the cloſe of their life, can from many remarkable, and convincing providences declare the truth, and faithfulneſs of God; and truely whilſt I ſpeak here, of the Chriſtians experience, I think its ſad, and a great short coming, that there is

not

not a more serious improvement of it for this end, which is a very concerning duty on such who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, & O what an excellent addition would this be to their testament, when they are to leave the World, to leave a testimony behinde them to the faithfulnes of God in his Word, and promise, and thus put their seal to the same, from what they have oft proven by sure experience, for this should prove a singular help to strengthen others, and spread a broad the same, and good report of religion, yea, thus one generation should declare the works of the Lord to another, and transmit the memory of his goodnes to succeding ages.

7. This is something which not only the Christians experience doth witnes, and in every time take place, but hath also a peculiar reference to these ages, and periods of times, wherein such particular truths, should have their accomplishment; for its true that the Prophets of old did not onely in their predictions, hold forth in general, the truth, and certainty of these things, which should fall out, but they also inquired and searched diligently anent the time to what or what manner of time the Spirit by them, did point at 1 *Pet.* 1: 11. For 'tis truely clear, that a piece of the Word, was under the Law to have its peculiar accomplishment, that part of it also, under the Messias Kingdome, in the dayes of the gospel, should be fulfilled, and we find a very concerning part thereof belongs to their latter times; and there is betwixt such periods of time, and revolution of the Churches case, and the bringing forth of such a piece of the Scripture, to a performance, a very certain and undoubted connection.' Tis true we do not yet well understand (which will be one of the last manifestations, the Church shall have at the end of time, when the mystery of God is

finished) how to sort the event exactly to the Word; but it is sure (and were worthy of our study and observation) how every age hath something of the Scripture peculiar thereto, yea carrieth forward the Lords work and design a further step, may we not see how one age fulfilleth such a piece of the Churches sufferings appointed for her, and puts some great tryal and sad persecution over her head, which she was to meet with; whilst an other age, carrieth her thorow an other change, and giveth her a time of rest and breathing, how such a time bringeth Antichrist forward to his height, and such a following age begins the turn of the Churches case, yea every several period and revolution of time, still addeth something, to that excellent history of the Word, and Providence, which we have since the beginning, and bringeth forth something further into the world of the Lords counsel and design about his Church.

8. The accomplishing of the Scripture is such a thing, we are to look after, in a special way here, which concerns this militant, and traveling condition of the Church, for if the Scriptures were once fully accomplished, and the great mystery of God therein finished, there were then nothing more to do, his work of providence were at an end, and time should be no more; this is something, that is not here perfected at once, but is still gradually carrying on, and then shall be compleat at the resurrection of the just, and second coming of the Lord, which is the last part of Canonick Scripture to be made out, when both his work and his word, and time, shall be all finished together; but while the saints are yet by the way, they have the written word and all these pretious promises therein, for present use and encouragement, for that is its proper work to take

them

them ſafe thorow this labyrinth of the world, and when it hath brought them to land, it hath no more to do, there will be then no more need for a Chriſtian to go to a promiſe, and adventure upon it, we ſhall then no more watch, with the watchmen in a dark, and ſtormy night, and hope for the breaking of the day, faith then ſhall not be at a ſtand, how ſuch a word ſhall be made out, becauſe of invincible difficulties in its way, no, then it hath done its work, and that which is written ſhall be ſwallowed up, in that which is ſeen and enjoyed, all the ſtreams of our encouragement will then loſe themſelves in a greater depth. O then its finiſhed and done what all the promiſes, prophecies, and threatnings of the Word, was bringing forth, and then no more need of ſomething as a pledge and earneſt in hand, to them who have the full poſſeſſion of the inheritance, under whoſe feet the God of peace hath trod Satan and all their enemies.

9. I ſhall adde this, the accomplishment of the Scripture, is ſomething, which is not onely demonſtrat to a Chriſtian by ſenſible influences, and Gods ſecret working with his Spirit, but is made out to the obſervation of men, in the way of providence, and not onely witneſſed by that internal evidence of the Spirit, but by an external teſtimony, which both rationally, holdeth this out to the judgement, and ſenſibly to the ſight and experience, and this is the ſtrongeſt and moſt full of all outward evidences, ſince the world muſt ſhut their eyes if they do not ſee it, and a Chriſtian muſt deny what he both ſeeth and feeleth, if he deny a witneſs to this.

II. We would conſider the *accompliſhment of the Scripture*, as that which *is the Lords peculiar work and*

design in the World, and that great business which is upon the wheels of providence amidst the various changes and revolutions, which are here within time, for bringing about whereof the blessed thoughts of his heart, are fixed and unalterable. This is indeed a grave and serious truth worthy to be more noticed and laid to heart by men, that the glorious providence of God which goeth throughout the earth, and doth particularly reach all things which come to passe, the smallest as well as the greatest interests of men, in all these, doth move certainly and infallibly for the accomplishing of the Scripture, which is that great thing God hath before his eyes, for it is no personal interests of men how great so ever they be, that can answer this end, it is something beyond the Setting up of Kings, or overturning Kingdomes and Nations that he doth minde amidst these various changes, which are in the World, 'tis some greater thing, then that which we most notice, the Lord thereby designes, how such a party is advanced, and others brought low, for these things come within the reach of his care and providence, in so far as the fulfilling of the Scripture is therein concerned; the outmaking of the promises, and threatnings one syllabe whereof he doth more value then all the Crownes and Kingdomes of the earth, yea will not let it fall to the ground, though it should be at the rate of laying cities, and countries desolate, for its in this the Lord taketh pleasure, and exerciseth his blessed thoughts, even the bringing about what he hath spoken in his Word.

Now to clear this further, I shall hold forth these following grounds, whence it may appear.

First, The fulfilling of the Scripture, and written Word is so great a thing, and of such concernment, that the blessed Majesty of God, thought it worthy of

of a place in his heart from all eternity, this was before him in his thoughts and counsels of old; even that mervellous work which should be the after-product, and outmaking of his Word to his Church here within time, and surely was such a plot and contrivance that as no lesse then infinit love, wisedome and power, was required to bring it about, so it was well becoming the Majesty of God, and worthy to be the work of all the three blessed persons of the Trinity; O if we could go down a little to this deep, and see the wonders that are there, we would find that knowledge which usually lesseneth our admiration of other things, would heighten it here, it would be new to us every day to think how great and mervelous a thing that is which the Word is bringing forth.

2. It is upon this, even the performance of the Word that the present encouragement, and after blessednes of the saints doth ly, for the great interest of the Church is adventured upon the Word, and embarked with it, which should be lost yea their stock and treasure which is laid up in heaven, and all that a Christian is worth, which is layd up in the promise, were then perished, if the Scripture should want an accomplishment, the Godly man hath then run and laboured in vain, & these who are fallen asleep in Christ have dyed in a sad delusion, providence would be like the work of the foolish builder, who begun and knew not how to finish. O how heighly then is the Lord concerned in fulfilling of his Word? That he may perfect what concerns his People, and having surely payed the price put them also in possession.

3. There is yet more then the interests of Angels and men, yea then heaven and earth is worth that depends upon the outmaking of the Scripture; the glory of God and especially the praise of that great attribute

his *faithfulnes*, which he will have no leſſe shine forth in the performance of his Word, then his power and wiſdome in this great fabrick of the univerſe, and theſe mervelous productions of nature; for he hath magnified his Word above all his works, therefore is his heart greatly ſet upon this, even the bringing to paſſe what he hath ſpoken, which if in the leaſt should fail, were no leſſe then to make God a lyer, and falſify his Word, who is through all the Church known by this bleſſed name, *The God of truth.*

4. We would conſider this, as that great truſt, which is put in his hand who onely in heaven and earth was found worthy to open the Book of Gods decrees and counſels, and looſe the ſeals thereof, a truſt which the Lord did not adventure upon the Angels, the ſmalleſt promiſe, being ſuch as requires no leſſe then an omnipotent power and the arme of *Jehovah* to bring it about; for which end, he whom the father hath anointed, is gone forth as a mighty man who rejoiceth to run his race, that he may perform his Word, and through this great deſign in the adminiſtration of providence, about his Church and People which he will not ceaſe or give over, until the myſtery of God in the Scripture, and all that was ſpoken by the Prophets be put to a cloſe, when Heaven and Earth at the pouring out of the laſt vial, shall give that ſolemn shout and exclamation, *It is finiſhed, it is finiſhed.* O if this were once fully perfect, there would be no more to do, then the Winter were paſt, and the Summer come, the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb should be heard, becauſe the bride hath made her ſelfe ready, then let al the trees of the wood rejoice, the hills break forth into ſinging, & all that is therein be glade, becauſe the Scripture and great deſign thereof is fully finished, & the day of the perfect liberty of the Sons of God is come.

5. The

5. The accomplishment of the Scripture is of such concernment, that nothing can be done until it be once finished, for this, time must wait; the Sun must keep its course, and the ordinances of the Heaven continue as they are, the World is but a scaffold until this building be perfected, for this the grave doth still retain her prisoners and the dust of the Saints must yet rest in hope, the creation still groaneth, and the marriage supper of the Lamb is deferred, the cry of the souls under the altar get not a full return, until all that is written in the Word be fulfilled.

6. We would consider, this is the great thing which the Lord this day is carrying on, even the accomplishment of his Word, for this is most brought upon debate, of any thing besides; the World challengeth it, and the hearts of the godly do oft call it in question; the Atheist scoffs at it, and sayeth where is the promise of his coming, there are often to appearance insuperable difficulties in the way of its performance, therefore doth the Majesty of God so much concern himself in this, for bringing about of which he is in a holy way restless, and providence in an unceasant motion, until he hath done that which he hath spoken in his Word. It was for this cause that the Scripture might be accomplished, that the Word was made flesh, & he who counted it no robbery to be equal with God, did take upon himself the forme of a Servant, this is of such account in his eyes, that what time he speaks concerning a Nation or People, ere it come not to passe, he will rather put forth omnipotency, for the working of miracles, and change the very course of nature, for this, he will make the deep dry, make a way through the red Sea, and cause Jordan stand as in heapes, that he may keep promise to his People; if there be no way for bringing about his Word,

Word, but through a Sea of blood, and over the bones and carcasses of his enmies, he will do it, and bring it to passe, though Walled Cities, and the Sonnes of Anack mighty and strong should stand in the way thereof. Abrahams old age, and Sarahs dead womb must not frustrat this, if the promise of the Churches restauration cannot be made out without a wonder shewed upon dry bones scattered at the graves mouth, this shall not be wanting; when God sayeth he'll bring down the enemyes of his Church, if the dust of the ground should arise, down they must come; how many great designs of men hath this blessed design (that the counsel of the Lord may stand) crushed and broken? so that their work and counsel hath been as the Spiders web, when it stood crosse to this end, the godly need not fear, that he be not a present help in time of trouble, for he will keep his word herein, though the Earth should be overturned and the Mountaines cast into the midst of the Sea; O who hath resisted his counsel! What are all these vicissitudes and changes here in the World? But making way for the Scriptures accomplishment, with what desire doth he move towards this end? So that as in *Zechary* 6: v. 8. the instruments by him appointed for executing his judgement and the threatnings of the Word, its said they have quieted his Spirit, his decrees are mountaines of brasse, which are unchangeable, the thoughts of his heart take place in all generations, therefore the Word which is gone forth out of his mouth shall not return in vain, but the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

III. *The accomplishment of the Scripture is a truth very clear and manifest*, whereof none can pretend ignorance, if they do not shut their eyes, and force their own

own light from the fear of ſuch a diſcovery; for the obſtruction doth not ly in the darkneſs of the object or that men cannot ſee this, ſince we have it ſo clearly held forth in great and legible characters, nay, we muſt ſay the cauſe is culpable, there is much of the will in it, which renders ſuch an ignorance without excuſe. O that this ſhould be ſo little lookt after, a matter of ſuch near and weighty concernment, when there needs not an other demonſtration, but *come and ſee* the works of the Lord through the earth, for he hath here ſo far condiſcended to his People, to bring the truth near, that they even feel and grip the ſame, yea doth in a manner ſay to every one as to Thomas, *put in your hands*, touch the Word, and truth thereof, and be no longer faithleſs, taſte but & ſee, that the Lord is good and that he is true in what he hath ſpoken.

We are indeed to look after a more clear, and full diſcovery of this truth the nearer the Church is to the end of time; there is a labyrinth as it were of turnings and windings, through which we may ſee the Word oft brought, ſo as we loſe ſight thereof, and are ready to ſtagger anent its performance; but its as true that the moſt eminent confirmations, the ſaints ever had of this truth, hath been after greateſt ſhakings thereanent, yea, the Lord hath in all ages, ſo viſibly ſealed his Word by its performance, that we may ſay, can he be a Chriſtian and a ſtranger to this in his experience, and a ſerious on-looker on providence and the diſpenſations of the time, wherein he lives, and a ſtranger to it, in his obſervation; yea, can any be ſo wholly brutiſh, not to diſcern a thing ſo clear that oftimes theſe, who run, may read?

But to ſpeak a little more to this I ſhall here point at ſome things, that may ſhew how manifeſt this truth is.

1. Is it not very clear, which we see every day, brings to light? A truth so conspicuous, both in Gods ordinary way with his Church, and in the several steps and passages of a Christians life: For these mercies which bring the Word, and promise to passe, are new every morning, and cry aloud, if we could hear, great is his faithfulness, this is indeed tryed, and needs there more, to convince a blind man, that his sight is restored to him, but that he certainly seeth; sure they never wanted confirmations here who do but seriously seek to be confirmed.

2. Is it not a clear truth, which not onely is found upon the exactest tryal; but is witnessed by such who ever tryed it in their most pressing straits, and extremity; for its in the darkest night this truth hath most brightly shined, and these more remarkable ventorious acts of faith, have they not still brought forth most convincing experiments thereanent? We may say there is none can give a better account of the performance of the Word, then these who against hope, have beleeved in hope, that this never made them ashamed.

3. Is it not also clear, whereof there are such solemn extraordinary confirmations in all ages? For that his name is near, his wondrous works declare, I am sure no time could ever deny its witness, how by great convincing providences, both of judgement and mercy it hath been so sealed, as hath forced Atheists to keep Silence, no time wherein the Church had not cause to erect a pillar, and engrave thereon, *We have seen with our eyes* the great and wondrous works of the Lord, by which he hath witnessed the truth of his Word.

4. Is it not a manifest truth which even in the most strange, and dark footsteps of providence, so clearly shineth

shineth forth, these which at the first look are an astonishment, and hard to be understood, yet after most clearly verify the Scripture, that whilst the Lords way goeth out of our sight, yea, out of the ordinary road of his working, through a labyrinth of turnings, and crosse dispensations, yet at length, it doth evidently clear, and disintangle it selfe, which men may oft see break forth as the sun out of a dark cloud, that shineth the more brightly, the more it was obscured.

5. Is it not very clear which can be demonstrated by such visible effects in these great changes of the World? For the fulfilling of the Scripture, is not a thing hid in a corner, but oft published in the house tops, that men may see legibly written, upon Kingdoms and Nations, the desolate ruines, and devastation of cities and houses great, and fair, which are made to be without inhabitants, so as these who go by may clearly read the cause, and bear that witness, *Lo there is sin visibly punished according to the Word.*

6. How clear is this, which we have so evidently drawen out, and acted over in a Christian walk? For what else is the spiritual conversation of such, these visible effects, and evidences of the grace of God all along a Christians way, but a visible convincing witness to the performance of the word? Hath not such a very audible Echo, and resound to that which is the great drift, and Scope of the Scripture; where men may see the Bible turnd over into a practical history, written forth, and acted on the heart, and conversation of the saints, as on a stage, or theatre: the Word living, speaking, moving, and clearly diffusing it selfe through all the veines, as it were, and conduits of a Christians life, so that if the truth, and reality of the grace of God be a thing manifest, and unquestionable,

nable, we must also see therein the real performance of the Scripture.

7. I shall adde we may clearly see how one piece of the Scripture, is nothing else but the punctual fulfilling, and accomplishment of the other, how that which was shadowed out by dark types, under the Law, and held in a Prophecy, through the Old Testament, is written before our eyes in a plain, and real history in the New Testament, and that the gospel is only a fulfilling of the Law, and the Prophets.

IV. Though its very manifest and by undenyable proofs can be demonstrated that the Scripture hath a real accomplishment and doth certainly take place, in the constant course of providence here in the World, that I am sure if men do not darken themselves they can be no strangers to such a thing, yet we must say. *This truth which most nearly concerns us, is to the most of men*, (even such who seem to give a large assent to the Word) *a mistery and dark riddle.* There are few who do but enquire if there be such a thing, if the promises and threatnings have indeed a certain outmaking, few do seriosly ponder the providences of God in which the truth and faithfulness of the Word shineth forth, that they may thereby be further confirmed, we see that to many, (alas too many) the great concernments of the Law and everlasting happiness are a trivial and an impertinent business, this is a truth the World doth passe without regarding: such as sport at Religion when they come to earnest here, dare not stand before this discovery, it concerneth them much to reconcile their principles with their practice, their fear begetteth hatred, and both put their wit and invention on the rack, how to dispute away any remander of a conscience, to imprison

priſon their light, and under the pretext of reaſon, run down godlineſs, and the abſolute neceſſity thereof, yea, beſids doth not ſenſuality wherein many wallow, and ſteep themſelves, ſo dull and drowne the ſoul, put ſuch an interpoſition of the Earth betwixt them, and this truth, as wholly darkens it? And; oh; how ſad that many having a large profeſſion to be Chriſtians ſcarce ever knew, what it is to put the Word to an eſſay, and tryal in the concernments of their life, to have their light followed with experience, wherein the very truth, and reality of Religion lieth.

To clear this, I ſhall hold forth ſome things which may ſhew how little this truth of the Scriptures accomplishment is known, or ſtudied by the moſt of men.

The abounding of ſo much Atheiſme that there are ſo many who not onely diſclaim the practice of that Religion they ſeem to profeſs, but do ſtate themſelves in moſt direct oppoſition to the rules, and principles thereof, theſe to whom the Scripture is but as a Romance, yea; doe onely converſe therewith to prove their wit, and parts in impunging the ſame; who avowedly mock at the judgements, and providences of God; I confeſs theſe may be reckoned Monſters, a very prodigy in the time, wherein they live, though alas, it is not the leaſt part of the World; and which is ſtrange, we ſee the moſt horrid Atheiſts do uſually abound, where the light of the Goſpel hath moſt ſhined, the ſavage places of the Earth bring forth no ſuch monſtrous birth, as are hatcht within the viſible Church, for thus the judgment of God putteth a blacker dye on them then others; O what a terrible ſound ſhould the fulfilling of the Scripture, have in mens eares, if they once

came to have serious thoughts thereof, since they cannot admit this but they must certainly read their own sentence of death, which a few dayes shall put in execution, and if the Scripture be true, they are then unspeakably miserable.

2. That indifferency which we see amongst men about Religion, and the most concerning truths of Scripture doth shew how little this is known or laid to heart, whence there is such a generation who do not professedly deny the Scripture, yet can turn it over in a Schoole probleme, and wonders that men should ingage so far upon it; it is not that it is hid from them, but they truly choise to hide themselves from it, as more suitable to that interest they drive, that the truth of God, should be rather a matter of opinion then of faith, a thing which they would dispute, but not beleeve; but, O, what other thoughts would a clear sight of this cause? That within so few dayes, the truths, and threatnings of the Word, shall be sad earnest, the fulfilling whereof no sharpness of wit, nor subtil arguments, will be able to evade.

3. That there is so much barren theory of Divine truths in the World, with so little serious Christian diligence, doth it not sadly witness how small acquaintance men have with this truth? Whence we see so great a part of these who professedly acknowledge the word, and are daily conversing with it, yet can give no other account thereof but report, so many that can satisfyingly discourse of the Scripture, could never put their seal to it, that *God is true therein*, whence are so many great Schoole divines, and able Ministers for parts, such visible Atheists in their way, and practice? Is it not, they really judge Divinity, and Religion, rather a science, and matter of speculation, then a matter of sense, and feeling, which

men

men should more live then speak, & cannot be known without experience the true end of knowledge; but, O this cannot be found in bookes, men will not meet with it in a throng of choiseſt notions, it confoundeth the wise, and disputer of his world, whilst the meaneſt, and most simple Christian oft knoweth more then theſe of greateſt parts.

4. The great Hypocrisy which is in the world, I mean within the visible Church, doth too clearly shew that this truth is little thought on, or laid to heart; for what is that false shew, and appearance (which we may say is not a sin; but the very sinfulneſs of sin) Is it not the height of Atheisme? And a real contradiction in their practice to this, that the Scripture of God is true, and will have an unqueſtionable accomplishment, O could any be so monstrously irrational, to drive this poor plot how to appear that which they are not, to be at such paines to act the part handsomly of a serious Christian, to personat his teares, and grief, his spiritual frame, his zeal for God, if he did think gravely on this truth, and did beleeve the threatnings of the Word; that they will surely take place and be within a little no complement, but sad earneſt, and that he is every hour standing under that Scripture-wo againſt Hypocrites? I am sure it would make his very hair stand upright, his joynts louse; and his thighs smite upon another, could he but seriously think upon this.

5. Theſe unwarrantable wayes which in a time of tryal men take for their escape, may witneſs this, that the word they do not judge a sure ground to adventure on; whence is there such heſitation in suffering times? From that day many taking there leave of Christ, who have rather choiſed sin then affliction, O is it not? They judge the teſtimony of the God of truth is not

sufficient security to carry them through such a straits & are not fully perswaded that it must come to passe what he hath promised, for if this were, they should reckon it their greatest safety to embarque their interest on so sure a ground, and with much quietnes repose their soul, and disburthen their care by putting it over on the word.

6. What doth the frequent discouragement and uncomfortable walk of the People of God speak forth, doth it not witnes how litle they are in earnest with this great truth of the Scriptures accomplishment or establisht thereanent? What meaneth these distrustful feares, and perplexed complaints: if their eye be but open to know, they have such a well as the promise of God, at their hand; how is it that the smallest straites are so puzling, and ready to out-wit them, that they so usually stumble at the crosse? And as things from without doe appear, their encouragement made to ebb and flow? Is not here the cause? That they stagger at the promise whilst probabilities in some visible way, do not go along to its performance: Its truely easy to have some sweet notions of faith at a distance, but whilst the tryal comes near, upon such a closse approach, that there is not an other way, but to put the whole stresse of this particular interest, on the Word, and on it alone many are then at a stand, because they are not throughly assured that though the earth should be overturned there is an absolut necessity for the promise of God to take place.

Now from these things may it not appear that the grave truth of the Scriptures accomplishment is but little known, or studyed? I confesse we may think on it with astonishment, how a matter so nearly concerning is not more our work, there are indeed many

things worthy to be known, but our short life can ſcarce allow time, or give leaſure for the ſtudy thereof, but O this, though we had only two dayes to live, I think might require the one, to be ſure, and perſwaded anent the truth of that whereon our heaven, and eternal bleſſedneſſe lyeth, to which we muſt lay the dead grip, when we are in the paſſage at that ſtrange ſtep betwixt time, and eternity. O what a wonder, how rational ſouls who walke on the border of the greateſt hope, and fear imaginable, can yet be ſo unconcerned thereanent, ſuch ſerious thoughts might force men to retire, and go ſit alone; and truely theſe things gravely conſidered may ſeem ſtrange and hard to reconcile.

1. That there is ſuch a thing as the very Word and Teſtimony of God, this day upon record, wherewith we have ſo much to doe, which doth offer it ſelf to mens tryal, and exacteſt ſearch, and yet we put it ſo little to that touchſtone, that we may know it upon an other account, then report or hearſay.

2. How in a matter of ſuch high importance as ſalvation through all eternity, and the ground of this hope men ſhould take the truth on an implicit faith, or ſatisfy themſelves, with a common aſſent thereto, as though it were enough to witnes our beleeving the ſame, becauſe we did never doubt or call it in queſtion, I am ſure men would not be ſo lax, and ſo eaſy to ſatiſfy in the moſt common intereſt they have here in the World.

3. How can men render to others a reaſon of their hope when it is enquired, who did never ask a reaſon of this at themſelves, or will theſe ſeal the truth with their bloud, who never had it ſealed upon their heart by experience.

4. Whence is it that men can have comfort in Scripture who are not well grounded in the faith thereof? Indeed these who are solidly perswaded anent the truth, and its certain out-making may have much joy and peace, whilst they know the ground of their confidence can bear up any stresse or burden they lay upon it, and for what end did the Lord witness the certainty of his Word by two immutable things, wherein 'tis impossible for him to lie, but that from so sure and strong a ground, his People might have strong consolation?

5. How can any think to adventure their immortal soul upon that whereon they fear to venture an outward interest, or put over their deerest things in his hand and keeping who could never say, they know in whom they beleeved?

6. May it not seem strange that men can beleeve a certain performance of the Word, and promises, and not be more deeply affected therewith? O is this true, shall it surely come to passe, and not one jot thereof fall to the ground, and should it not cause us awake in the night, and bear us more company? Ought we not to think our selves at a losse that day wherein we take not a turn in the meditation of divine truth, if we be sure that these must take place?

7. I would adde, if this be indeed the Scripture of God, which surely hath an accomplishment. O how are we so little Christians? Why doth mens walk, so sadly jarr with so great an hope? What manner of persons should these be, that are perswaded within a little these heavens must passe away as a scroll, the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth be burnt up? I think if this will not presse home on men to be serious and diligent, they must be in a very sad lethargie.

V. *The accomplishment of Scripture is a most clear, and undeniable witness of its divinity*, that it is his Word who is not like man to ly, or the son of man to repent, and hath this as its distinguishing character, that not one syllable thereof falls to the ground: This is the undoubted priviledge of God, and of him alone, to forsee things contingent which are many ages after to fall out, and hath no dependance upon necessary, and natural causes; and truly, this may be a convincing argument, yea, we may say of all external testimonies is the greatest; but its strange to think what a generation there is who can sport at the Scripture, and question the truth thereof, who yet did never once seriously enquire if such a thing be true, else so clear a witness might stare them in the face, such a party we should look on with compassion, its also sad to think at how poor a rate far below their allowance, many of the Saints doe here live; because there is so little of that excellent and more noble Spirit, to search the Scripture for their further comfort and establishment thereby.

It is true this blessed record doth bear witness to it self, and is known by its own light whereon there is such a visible impresse of the glorious God, such convincing marks of its true descent, as may throughly shew whose it is, and how far it exceeds all humane invention, and thus by a clear manifestation of the truth, doth commend it self to mens consciences as a safe ground whereon they may repose their soul: It is also clear, how wonderfully the Scripture hath been preserved, and the original copyes thereof keept through all ages, that whatever small variation there may appear as to some *Apiculi*, which in some places hath caused divers readings, yet, in any necessary or saving truth the greatest Criticks

will confesse they do not in the least vary, and it is known (wherein we are to adore that special providence of God) that the Iewish Church, to whom this sacred *depositum* was delivered, did with such exact and singular care look to the same, even in the least tittle, or letter thereof this being the great work and study of the the Mazorites, from one age to another, to see to the preserving of that great record, from being in the least vitiat, or corrupt; and the greatest adversaries of the truth cannot possibly deny that aggreement betwixt these many original copyes, in the whole substance, which may be very convincing to the World. And do not men see, how marvellous the whole frame of the Scripture is? What a correspondency betwixt all the parts thereof, that nothing in it doth in the least, vitiat the proportion, & beauty of the work, but all alongst an evident tendency to advance holinesse and conform the soul to God; With a wonderful consent and harmony in answering to this great end, we see the simplicity, and plainness of its style, yet backt with a convincing Majesty, and authority upon the conscience; yea besids it hath been attested by miracles that were great in themselves, famous in their time, transmitted to the Church in after ages, with unanswerable evidences of their truth, that not only the witnes of the Word, but other pressing, and rational grounds may let us see there could be no deceit, or impostur therein.

These are a great testimony to the truth, but I may say, on very sure ground that, next to that great witnes of the Spirit, there is no argument more convincing to reach Atheisme a stroke and throughly satisfy an exercised spirit who may be plunged anent this great thing, the authority of the Scripture, then a clear discovery of its performance whilst under the assault

aſſault of ſuch a temptation, if this be the very word of God, they may but retire within, & then turn their eyes abroad in the World, to ſee what a viſibe impreſſe of the Word is ſtamped on every piece of the work, and providence of God, Now for further clearing I would offer theſe few things.

1. Firſt the accomplishment of the Scripture is a very publick teſtimony from Heaven to its divinity, whilſt the Lord by his works through the earth which are done in the view of Angels and men doth ſolemnly avow that this is his Word; for we muſt ſay his work within on the hearts of his People, & without about the Church is ſuch, whereat men, yea all the magicians of the earth may ſtand amazed, and confeſſe that nothing leſſe then a divine almighty power can accomplish the ſame.

2. This gives in the witnes of all the generation of the righteous, who from the beginning have proven the truth thereof, yea ſealed by the blood of many excellent Chriſtians, ſome of whom though they could not well diſput for it, yet, had ſo ſtrong a demonſtration of the power of the truth within, as made it an eaſy work to dy for the ſame.

3. This doth clearly shew the Scripture is an unchangeable rule of righteouſnes, that alters not but takes place in all ages, whence ſuch as are wiſe to bring providence in to the Word, and compare the experience, and remarks of one time with another, may have a great reach, & be thus led in a ſure path as to the forſeeing of events.

4. This alſo doth demonſtrat that it is his Word who doth rule and guide the World, and hath a ſoveraign dominion over the ſame, whilſt we may here ſee ſuch remarkable events which both in the preſent, and in former times have fallen out, as may shew

a power, that can reach the greatest with a stroke, shake the most established Kingdomes and even over the belly of insuperable difficulties, accomplish the Word, yea that surely the Spirit of the wheels which moves them is from him whose Word this is; for it is not more clear that these courtaines of the Heavens are stretcht forth over the earth, then that the Scripture is stretcht out over the whole work and frame of providence, so as all the motions, and steps thereof even of the most casual things that fall out hath a visible tendency to accomplish these ends, which the Scripture hath held forth.

5. This clearly sheweth it must be his Word who hath foreseen all things that were to befal the Church, and the various changes and adventures of every Christians life through time, whilst it is so wonderfully shaped, and suited to every new tryal of the Church, as if intended only for that time, and to every case of a godly man, as though it had been alone write for them.

6. This also sheweth that he who is the author of the Scripture and hath framed that admirable piece must have some immediat correspondence with the Spirit of man, knoweth our sitting down, and rising up, yea doth search the heart, and the reines; for experience can tell how the Word is derected to the heart, doth reach the most inward contrivances thereof, doth so clearly reveal, and open up a Christian to himselfe, that we may say of a truth, he is the God of the Spirits of all flesh, and one greater then our heart whose it is.

7. I shall further adde, the fulfilling of the Scripture in the experience of the Saints, doth shew it is not a dead letter, but hath power, and life; and there must be an enlightning quickning Spirit, that surely

ſurely goeth along with the ſame, this clearly demonſtrates ſomething above words, yea above nature in the written Word, that can make ſuch a change upon the ſoul, give life to the dead, open the eyes of the blind, yea, can turn a lump of earth, that formerly tended downward, now, without any violence to move from a principle of life towards God as the ſparks flee upward.

VI. *The accompliſhment of the Scripture is a moſt pleaſant, and truely delectable ſubject*, worthy of our Serious thoughts, and ſtudy; for here is held out the higheſt truth for the judgement to contemplat, the truth and faithfulneſs of God in the Word, and here is alſo the greateſt good for the affections to embrace, and delight in, as that wherein our whole happineſs is certainly wrapt up; it is undenyable that it is the godly man, who knoweth beſt what true and ſolide pleaſure is; which he doth not loſſe, by turning his heart from the creature to God, but maketh a bleſſed exchange; O, how far doth the joy, and delights of the ſoul exceed theſe of the ſenſes, and the delight of a Chriſtian how far doth it ſurpaſſe that of a natural man, even in his beſt eſtate; and ſure this pretious ſtudy of the dayly performance of the Word, is one of theſe paths of pleaſure, which would bring in more ſolide joy to the ſpirit in ſome few houres, then ſome years wallowing in the carnal delights of the flesh, which is but as pleaſure in ſport, but quickly turneth to grief in earneſt; it is one of the great miſtakes of the World, that religion tends ſo much to ſadden, and diſquiet the ſoul; nay it is certainly the want of this, becauſe we are ſo little truely religious, when we ſcruffe over our duety, and take but a paſſing look of the wayes and work of God in the World,

World, then it is indeed very affrighting, and unpleasant; but when in a more Christian way, we doe seriously look thereupon, and get our heart near God, taking the Word alongst with us, O how delightful, & ravishing a sight will this be! I truely think though there were not a command, though it were no duety, nor such advantage in the study of this grave truth, yet that joy, and refreshment which the soul would find in such a diligent search, in going down into this blessed deep, should invite us thereto.

But when I speak of this, what a sweet, and delightful subject, the performance and out-making of the Scripture is, it must be understood that it is so only to the saints, and it is no wonder the World keep at such a distance with it, for this is a truth they can not bear, they hate it, which, as Micajah, doth Prophesy alwayes hard things, and carrieth a message of death to them; a serious look of this truth to ungodly men, is as the handwriting upon the wall before them, which doth foretell their approaching ruin, and should cause them all tremble, the knowledge whereof must encrease their sorrow, and disquyetness, yea, cause them cry out, O, doe not torment us before the time, for they are surely undone, and ruined if the Scripture of God be true, and hath a performance; But O what pleasant and refreshfull tydings, doth this carry to a Christian! What a sweet view doth he here get of the inheritance, and blessed estate of the saints, which may cause such an exclamation, how great is that goodnes which is laid up for these that fear thee!

To demonstrate this, I shall hold out some things, from which we may see how delightful a subject, the accomplishment of the Scripture is for a Christian to study.

1. Se-

1. Serious converſe with this grave truth leadeth forward to practice, and thus helpeth to bring down theory to experience, which is the moſt ſweet, and deſirable of all other demonſtrations, that we can have of the truth of the Scripture, and maketh our light clear, and pleaſant to the taſte, turning the exerciſe of our judgement, and reaſon thereanent into ſenſe, and feeling; we are then made to ſee what a difference there is, betwixt that diſcovery which a ſpiritual man (whoſe religion is his practice) hath of this, and the cold winter-light of natural underſtanding that hath no heat or warmenes therewith, which is as great a difference as betwixt hearing of ſuch a thing by report, and ſeeing it with our eyes.

2. This bleſſed ſtudy, how the Scripture hath certain accompliſhment, would help to read the Word with an other kinde of pleaſure, O, what repreſentation, ſhould then the truths and promiſes thereof have to the godly man! It would be as one going in to look over his charters, & the great things therein contained, which he doth not in the leaſt debate, or queſtion, ſince they are paſt the ſeals, and fully ratifyed, & now conſidereth all which is promiſed, as his own, which he looket in former times upon, but as a common thing, whilſt he made not earneſt of the certainty thereof, and what an intreſt he had in the ſame, O, when he readeth that promiſe of a new heaven and earth, & that glorious eſtate which abideth the Saints! He cannot turn his eyes, & thoughts ſo eaſily off it, but is made to ſtand, and wonder, that ſo great a thing, that will make ſuch a marvellous change in his condition, is even ſhortly to come to paſſe; how ſweet, and pleaſant is it for ſuch to turn over theſe promiſes, who can ſet to his ſeal, and bear this witnes, that he hath as really proven the truth thereof by ſure experi

perience, as he knoweth he hath a real being, surely the Bible is an other thing to these, then it is to the great part of men, who only make it the subject of their contemplation.

3. In this blessed study we should have much laid to our hand to observe, and our observation made sweet, and pleasant to us; for there we might see, how all the paths of the Lord towards his People, are mercy and truth, this would give us a refreshful diary of providence, how in such a plunging strait we found the Word sensibly sealed; what observable confirmations we have had therewith, at such a time, and in such a condition, the after-recounting of which in ane houre of tryal, or in the evening of our life, would exceed these greatest pleasures, the Men of this World can have in looking over their gold, and greatest treasures, which for many years they have been laying up.

4. In the serious study of the dayly accomplishing of the Scripture, we should have a most satisfying view, and prospect of what God is doing up and down eath what purposes and designes he hath on foot; and how things here beneath do work together for carrying on of the same, we should see what an excellent, and curious piece of work this frame of providence is, which the more it is considered, it will be the more a wonder, how perfect in all its various collours, what an observable concurrence there is there, how several discords, which we see here, do yet agree with one consent, for the compleating of Gods design, which is still going on, and whilst we think there must be some disorder amongst the wheels, we are made after to see that this confusion, was an excellent step of providence confounding the wisdome of men, every piece of his

way

way being so knit to another, as discovers to such who make this blessed truth their serious study, a most rare contexture beyond the reach, and up-taking of the greatest artists that ever was. Here also we might go up to that watch-tower of Christian observation, and from thence, take a grave look of Gods way, and lay his work in the World to the Scripture, as the measuring line, where we should see (and find the sight thereof very pleasant) how the Word every day takes place, doth issue through all the veines, and arteries of providence, each line whereof is so exactly drawn, as by a pincel in some skilfull hand, to that great exemplar of the Scripture; here we might discern these eminent examples of judgement, and mercy that in every age are set before us, how wicked men prosper for a time, yet have a dreadful issue, & are suddenly cast into destruction, they spread as a green bay tree, and within a little their place cannot be found, how the godly are oft sore afflicted, yet flourishing as the palme trea, and the more they are depressed, the more they grow; how the enemies of the Church are oft lifted up for a sorer fall, & the Church brought low, in order to her greater enlargement; how judgement findeth out sinners, and is oft exactly proportioned in measure and kinde to the sin, & on the other hand how integrity is sore tossed oft, yet still falleth upon its feet, and overclouded that it may shine more brightly after; how the threatnings of the Word do visibly overtake Kingdomes, and Nations, bring down great houses, causeth those brought up in scarlet embrace the dung hil, and letteth not the hoary head of cruel and wicked men goe oft into the grave in peace, and again to consider how the Lord forsaketh not his People, but sheweth respect to their way, the good man walketh in his integrity, and

his

his seed after him is blessed. O, how sweet an exercise were this for a Christien even to losse himself in!

5. From thence we might in a great measure discern what of the night it is with the Church; if there be any evidences that it is neer day; & what such a sinful case doth threaten; we would be skilful to feel the Churches pulse, & thereby find what symptomes there are of life or death, & perceive a dark cloud of judgement casting up, when it is but like an handbreadth; surely this study should make us wise to know the times, and what we ought to do therein; for amongst these various events which fall out in every age, the Lords way is constant with it self, and with his truth, if we be right onlookers.

6. Here we should have a most pleasant and clear view, how the Scripture of God, comprehendeth the whole state of the Church, from the beginning to the end of time; that it is a most full, and perfect register of all the vicissitudes, and alterations, which are to go over her head whilst in a militant condition; and doth also most exactly point out these occurrences, and remarkable events, which fall out in the ordinary way, and course of providence, that we may read them as evidently in the Word, as we see them with our eyes fall out in the World; for in following this study, we should clearly see how the Scripture bringeth the Church to light, out of the womb of an eternal decree, and doth trace it from the first promulgation of the Gospel after the fall through these dark times before the flood, whilst it was but in families, and through that long trial in Egypt, and all its settled, and flowrishing condition in Canaan, and carrieth her fordward through all the several changes of her case, under her following decay, and in the times of the captivity, even to the manifestation of Christ,

Christ, and dawning of the gospel; and as itthus taketh in within its reach, the whole estate, and the special events, which did befal the Church under the Law, so we may see how the Scripture also followeth the Church, through the whole time of the gospel, and bringeth her as a grain of mustard seed from a day of small things, until it bring her to perfection, taketh her as it were by the hand from her infancy, and goeth with her through all the turnings of her condition; through that long, and dark night of Antichrists reign, pointeth clearly out her condition, & various assaults that shee should endure in that time, and that blessed victory which shee should after have, though not all at once, but gradually over her enemyes, and that the Word, and the Church do never part, but one walketh step for step with the other, until it bring her safe to land, and as it were put her off its hand, and guard, at the comming of Christ.

7. This would also help us to sweet thoughts, and give us matter of a song in the saddest night of the Churches condition, when we see how Gods great design in the World is the accomplishing of the Scripture, and know that his ends which he hath held forth therein, cannot be frustrat, it would serve to silence all our complaints, with wondering at Gods way, and triumphing in the works of his hands; we should not then be affrayed of evill tydings; a stormy time would not outwit us; being perswaded that though the earth should be overturned, it shall be surely well with the righteous, the Church must flowrish, and all her enemyes be found lyars, because he is faithfull that hath promised, whose Word will as surely come to passe as the sun doth return after a dark night.

VII. *It doth now more specially concern the godly in*

these latter times, to study this great truth of the accomplishment of the Scripture, and set about a serious inquiry, and search therein as a truth that shall yet be in a further measure discovered, and opened up, the nearer the Church is to the end of time which may thus appear.

1. Herein is the Word expres, that one piece of the Scripture, which from former ages was sealed up, should in the latter dayes be clear, and easy to understand, *Dan: last Ch.4. 9. ver.* The seal is there put on; but go thy way Daniel for these Words are closed, and sealed to the time of the end, but *Rev. last Ch. and ver. 9.* We have that bar taken of, seal not the sayings of the Prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand; because then the time did draw near, to which a more full discovery, and opening up of the Scripture was reserved, and a more large manifestation of the spirit beyond former ages. Now by the last dayes, we are not only to understand, the whole time of the gospel, though it is thus tearmed in the Scripture, but the latter part of these last times, which is more especially pointed at, even the close, and evening of time, that last Epocha, and period of prophetick chronology, to which a greater accomplishment of Scripture Prophecies is reserved.

2. This also is expresly promised that in the latter dayes, the Church shall have a more full discovery of this truth, how the Scripture is verified, *Dan. last. Ch. v. 4.* many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased, which increase as it clearly pointeth at the last times, and that bright day the Church shall have, when Israel shall be brought in to Christ, it doth also point at, and promise some greater light, and a more full opening up of the mysteries of the word, & fulfilling thereof, for the former part

part of the Chapter sheweth, that increase of knowledge doth relate to these things which were before sealed; we wait and believe the further accomplishment of this promise to the Church beyond all we have yet seen, that many Scripture-truths now dark, and abstruse shall be made so clear, as shall even cause us to wonder at the grosse mistakes we once had thereof, yea, that after generations shall have a discovery, and uptaking of some Prophecies now obscure, which shall as far exceed us, as this time doth go beyond former ages, which comparatively we must say were very dark. O! when that promise of the incalling of the Jewes shall once take place, what a wonder will they be to themselves that their understanding should have been under such a vail, when the truth shall be clear, and evident to them in that day? Will it not be a sweet, and easy work for the godly to sort together the predictions of the Word, and the events? And truely there is much now wrapt up in Scripture Prophecyes, not yet fulfilled, which we may say, in after times when the event shall unvail their meaning, wil exceed, yea, confound all these comments, many have had upon them.

3. Is it not also clear, that these Prophecies which of all the Scripture were most obscure, and overclouded with dark figures, and allegories, concerning which there had been such mistake, and hesitation by the Church, so many perplexing queries, have a peculiar respect to the last times? And that then they shall be made plain, and easy, when so notable a key as the event doth open them up; such as these of the witnesses taking life, and rising again, Babylons fall, and ruine, Christs Reigning with his Saints a thousand Yeares, which now are in some measure already cleared, from their begun accomplishment, beyond

former times, but we wait for a more full commentary, that time shall give upon the same.

4. It is in the latter times that the glory of God in his truth, and faithfulnes, shall most eminently shine forth, that is a part of the solemn congratulation of the Church upon Babylons fall, *Revelat. 15: ver. 3.* not only *great and marvelous are thy works*, but *just and true are thy wayes*, for truely in this stroke of the judgement of God, and these remarkable providences concurring therewith, the fulfilling of the Scripture will be so plain, and undenyable, that we may say, it will then dazel the eyes of men, even greatest Atheists, alarme the World, yea very effectually contribute (we have ground so to judge) to that promised encrease of the Church, and incoming of the Jewes, when in Antichrists fall, and ruine, they shall see so convincing a seal put to one of the most considerable Prophecies of the Word, in the accomplishment whereof much of the Prophetick part of the New Testament relating to the Churches state, and her long triall under Antichrists reign, may be seen clearly verified.

5. The Lord hath reserved his greatest Works to the latter dayes, wherein his judgments shall be manifest, and the Word confirmed by such solemn convincing providences, that men will not get them passed without a remark; we are this day witnesses to many such, & are looking what these times shall yet bring forth, that the great, and remarkable acts of the Lord, must force the World to see, a divine power, and say, lo there is an undoubted accomplishment of the Scripture.

6. The Church in these last times, hath peculiar advantages, for understanding this truth of the Scriptures accomplishment, which former ages had not

see

First a great part thereof is now fulfilled that men may see with their eyes, if they but know how to lay the Word, and work of God together, the Christian Church had in former times, but dark glances at these great things, which we have this day visibly transcribed in providence; the promises were then travelling in birth of that which is now brought forth. 2. Are we not mounted as it were on the shoulders of that experience and observation of former times? which hath been transmitted to us, and we must say upon that account, the Church hath now a greater seal and confirmation of the truth, then what it had in the dayes of the Prophets, and the Apostles, even when Christ was in the flesh. 3. The Temple of God and Ark of his Testament is now opened in Heaven, light more fully abounding, and the meanes of knowledge; And, O! should not this be much our study, who have a greater talent then former ages! certainly this will be a sin of a deeper dye, then in times of ignorance, since we can be no strangers to this truth, without shutting our eyes, blinding the conscience, doing violence to our light, when the Lord doth give his People such solemn confirmations.

7. I shall add, is it not clearly foretold in that *Dan.* 12: *ver.* 4. that in the last times this will be one of the special exercises of the saints to enquire, and make a diligent search concerning the Scripturs accomplishment? For its there said, many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased, importing that this shall be much their study, and cause a diligent search, whereunto the great works of God in these times shall invite them; and what should be the posture of the Godly in these dayes (on whom the end of the world is come) should it not be like the watchman in the last watch of the night, who looketh

oft what appearance there is from the east of the day breaking? a serious enquery what of the Scripture is fulfilled, whereby we may know on very clear grounds, if the night be far spent, the day at hand, and that the coming of the Lord to judgement draweth near.

VIII. *This is a great, and concerning duety for Christians to study this truth, that they may have something more then report, how the Scripture hath a sure accomplishment*, and doth take place in the providences of the time wherein we live. I must think strange that there is such a great help as this, so near, and yet we see it not, nor do seriously ponder the same, when the command is so expres to observe the works of the Lord, which for that end are shewed forth, that men may enquire, and read the faithfulnes of God therein, yea, that so great a truth, which would bide the search of all the criticks of the World, a truth wherein our blessednes through time and eternity lieth, should offer it self to our triall, and yet, is so little known; O, who can dispense with the neglect of this duty? by which we answer that solemn call, and invitation of the works of God, do honour him, serve our generation, are helpers to our own faith, and are thereby helped to strengthen others, yea are brought to see with our eyes, and from experience, what before was as a strange thing unto us.

Now to clear how much this is a Christians duty, to study a practical converse with the Word, and to be serious observers of its accomplishment, let us consider.

1. We are thus helped to declare the works of the Lord and to give him the glory of his faithfulnes; and is not that a grave duty? Which at all times in every station, and condition of life, should engadge men

men to this ſtudy; thus, every Chriſtian may become a witnes to the truth, and put his ſeal thereto, for which he ſhould think his life truely deſireable, and doth in no ſmall meaſure, attain the true end thereof, though he had no other opportunity, for his maſters ſervice; we may ſay, this truth of the Scriptures accomplishment like a great roll, hath been tranſmitted from hand to hand, from one age to another, atteſted, and as it were ſubſcribed by ſo many witneſſes, it doth thus come to our time, and to every mans doore and require their perſonal witneſſing and ſealing of the ſame.

2. This ſhould make it an eaſy work, to truſt the Word, and to adventure thereon in the ordinary occurrences of their life, they may well truſt God in a ſtrait, who have ſo ſtrong an argument to make uſe of, that oft they have tried him, and the truth of his Word, by many, many experiences; will not theſe that know his name truſt in him? Which was a notable teſtimony from a ſerious Chriſtian in a very sharp trial; oft have I tried God, and ſhall I not learn to truſt him once?

3. This doth lay the Chriſtian in the way of that promiſe. *Pſal.* 107. *laſt. ver.* a promiſe truely large, and comprehenſive, but little conſidered, that *ſuch as are wiſe to obſerve the works of God, they ſhall ſee the loving kindnes of the Lord*, even in their own particular caſe, made out to them, yea, whilſt they are ſerious to obſerve his works abroad in the World, and his way to others they ſhall be no loſers, thereby at home; but find this promiſe meet them and turn their general obſervation, unto perſonal experience of the lovin g kindnes of the Lord.

4. Thus the ſaints by experiencing the truth of the Word get a convincing ſeal thereby to their intereſt in

the promise; for begun possession is indeed a strong witnes to this right, when they can say, they have got as certain returns of the Word which they have put to an essay, in some particulars of their life, as they are sure of any thing they did ever see, so that from unquestionable experience they may set up a pillar, & write thereon *Hither to hath the Lord helpt us.*

5. Thus should Christians, with much advantage be helped to convince gainsayers; for its sure, Atheisme could not make so bold, and publick an appearance, if men did not so much take their religion on trust, O, the serious experienced man, can with an other confidence own the truth, whose experience, and observation of the works of God, give him an argument that none can answer, while not only he can assert, but conduct, and lead men to the things themselves, that they may see if in such and such particulars, the Scripture be not truely fulfilled.

6. Thus the providence of God, should have a more sweet refreshing countenance, when from this great height, that watchtower of Christian observation we take a look thereof, and truely otherwayes, men will stumble, at the most ordinary dispensations, and think Gods Work is a masse of confusion, but here we are taught to see, how the written Word, and his way, are linked in a most sweet agreement.

7. We may thus trace Divine truth, even by our sense, and feeling, and joyn the Word, and experience in a regular correspondence; yea thus we should have a clear transscript of the Lords way with his Church taken out of that great authentick original of the Scripture, and there see on what a solid basis, and foundation that magnificent structure of providencs raised up, what a notable key should we thus

thus have for opening the Scripture, by a ſerious humble inquiry, after the works of God? Where not only the impreſſion, and ſign of the power, but of the truth, and faithfulneſs of the Lord are ſo very legible.

8. This is a piece of our talent, wherewith we are entruſted, of which every Chriſtian ſhould ſtudy a ſerious improvement, knowing they muſt render an account, what their obſervation of this great truth hath gained and what further eſtabliſhment, and confirmation they have thus attained.

9. I would adde, the concernment, and weight of this ſtudy may preſſe it much on us; for if the Scriptures accomplishment be an undoubted truth, O! then this is ſure the Saints have a great inheritance, they are Princes, though now under a diſguiſe, and though yet minors they are heirs of more then the World can ſhadow forth; the Chriſtian is then more happy on a dunghil, ſcraping his ſore, then ſuch who are cloathed in purple, and fare delicately every day; if this be ſure, we ſhould look with compaſſion rather then envy on theſe, whom the World doth account happy, we need not queſtion the gain of Godlines, then it is ſure, that ſuch who ſow in teares ſhall reap in joy, and the righteous though now trampled under, in the morning ſhall have dominion; yea, in a word, we may then on ſure ground ſolace our ſelves with the thoughts of that great change, which will be within a little, when the grave muſt render back her priſoners, and may with as much aſſurance of a bleſſed reſurrection ly down in the duſt, as we are ſure there will be a morning, when we ly down at night. O! then, there is a Heaven, and a hell, that is certain, eternity is not a night dream, and one moment ſhall ſhortly

put an end to all our services, yea, the shutting of our eye lids at death, shall but open them in the Paradise of God.

HAving touched this truth a litle in the general, I shall now, hold forth some arguments whence *the accomplishment of the Scripture* may be demonstrat; they are these five which I intend to prosecute in the following discourse.

FIRST *Argument*, To prove the Scripture is certainly fulfilled, and hath an accomplishment is this; That which hath been in all ages the testimony of the Saints, what every particular Christian doth seal, from their frequent, and sure experience, what is found, and proved by them, in their dayly walk, upon exactest trial, yea, what as many as ever were serious in religion do witness must be certian, and true.

But the accomplishment of the Scripture is such,

Therefore, &c,

II. *Argument*, That which is manifest, and legible in the whole course, and tenor of providence about the Church and by clear convincing instances, both of judgement, and mercy, is made out to the observation of every age, must be a certain truth, but the Scriptures *accomplishment* is such.

Therefore.

III. *Argument*, That which hath not onely the Christians testimony from experience, and of the Church from constant observation, but is obvious even to the view of the World, which from the conscience

science of the worst of men, doth force a testimony that they can neither shift, nor deny, which also may be demonstrat to the conviction of ordinary observers, & hath a publick acknowledgement from greatest Atheists, and mockers of religion in every age, must surely be a clear truth.

But, &c. Therefore.

IV. Argument, That which was to take place in such and such periods of time and hath accordingly come to passe, the event exactly answering to the prediction, yea, that whereof the great part is now fulfilled, and but a litle at this day remaineth to be made out, must be a certain truth.

But the great part of the Scripture is thus already fulfilled, and but a little thereof now remaineth.

Therefore,

V. Argument. That which not only is for the most part already accomplished, but is a thing whereof we have such sure confirmations, yea, so great a pledge in our hand from the Lord, that what yet remaines shall be certainly fulfilled, must it not be an undoubted truth? But the Scripture as to these special predictions, that are not yet made out, is such concerning which the Lord hath given his People a very large pledge, and strong confirmations, now in these latter times, to believe their certain accomplishment. Therefore.

ARGUMENT FIRST.

THat the Scripture of God contained in the Old And new Testament, wherein our great hope, and

and comfort doth ly, is certainly true, and hath a real accomplishment, may be thus demonſtrat, *That it is tried, and Proved in the godly mans experience, to which in all ages, yea, from innumerable proofs the ſaints have put to their ſeal, that this is a ſure, and faithful teſtimony.*

Experience is indeed a ſtrong demonſtration, and it is ſuch a witnes as leaveth no room for debate, for here the truth is felt, proven, and acted on the heart, which the Chriſtian knoweth well, and is as ſure of as he is perſwaded that he liveth or that the ſun when it shineth hath light, and warmnes therewith, it is true the World liveth at a great diſtance with this, they only converſe with the ſound of ſuch a thing, and we know the naked theory of Scripture-truth hath but a short reach and that it differeth as far, from that which a ſerious practical Chriſtian hath as the ſight of a countrey in a map is from a real diſcovery of the ſame; where the difference is not in the degree, but in the kinde: yet though this grave teſtimony of experience is a thing where to many (alace, too many) are ſtrangers, we muſt ſay ſo much thereof is obvious, as may force its authority on mens conſciences, and shew there can be no fallacy, or deluſion in this witnes, if they but allow the uſe, and exerciſe of reaſon, ſeing it is not the record of a few, at one time, or in one corner of the earth, but a ſolemne witnes from the ſaints, and followers of God, whoſe judgement, and integrity, their adverſaries muſt often confeſſe, yea, of all the ſaints in every age through the whole univerſal Church in parts of the earth moſt remote from other, and this, by moſt frequent reneued prooffs hath found, and experienced the truth, and real accomplishment of the Word: and now if this be not ſufficiently convincing, I would but

but adde, O! *will yow then come and see*, be but Christians indeed, and then ye will no more debate that testimony; and truly it is a very poore shift, for men, who have the Scripture before them, which of itself doth witnes its authority, and this backed with so solemn a seal from the Lord, by his works, and providence, to debate the Christians witnes, from their experience, because they do not see this themselves, for what is the cause thereof is it not their choise? that they do not follow on to know the same, the truth of God seeketh credit from no man upon trust, yea, craveth no more but that by a practical converse they would put it to a trial, and then it shall not decline their judgement.

Now to prosecute this argument a litle, I shall point at some special Scripture-truths, with which Christians have most usual trade, and converse in their own case; and give in therewith, their testimony, how these are clearly proved and verifyed by most sure experience: it is not to be here understood, the giving a particular account with respect to persons, time, or other circumstances, how the Word doth thus take place. I think it may be sufficiently convincing to instance in the general such clear uncontroverted experiences, which are well known to the godly, and have by them been oft proved amidst the various changes of their life (though not by all in the same measure but in some suitable proportion to their different syzes, trialls, and wrestlings) which can witness that real correspondence which the Word hath with the experience of the saints; and truely concerning these I may with some confidence assert, they are not naked, or airy notions, but such as can witnes their truth to the serious experienced Christian, whom on this account I dare attest.

I shall

I shall here instance. 5. Special truths of the Word, which are much tryed, and proved in Christians experience. 1. That there is such a contrariety betwixt the flesh, and the spirit, as the Scripture holdeth forth. 2. The deceitfulnes of mans heart. 3. That there is a spiritual, and invisible adversary, with whom we have war. 4. That the promises of the Word have undoubted accomplishment. 5. The truth also of the threatnings, I mean such under whose reach the godly may fall.

1. *That there is a contrariety betwixt the flesh, and the spirit*, a Law in our members rebelling against the Law of our mind, is a truth very clearly proved to the Christan, whose experience though sad doth undenyably verify, and confirm the Scripture, *Gal. 5: v. 17. Rom. 7: v. 19. 21. 23.* this is a piece of the Word which holds forth mans nature in its true shape and form, whither their byasse, and inclination most easily turneth, yea, so marvellously answereth their experience, that to question the same were to put it far beyond question that they know nothing of a new nature or principle of grace within. For who ever made earnest of Religion but their first acquaintance with the peace of God, was the beginning of this war; it is then that the house divideth, and corruption setteth up a standard, yea, no sooner can any begin to be a Christian, but he must be a souldier also; and we may say none ever attained such a measure of mortification, or was so old in the grace of God, as could priviledge them from the stirrings of the old man, and necessity of that complaint, who shall deliver us from a body of death, but what ever advantage some of the saints have above others, yet in this their experience can witnes.

2. They

1. They now know two different parties within themselves that until once grace came they could not understand, which at the same time in the very same action do act oppositly one to the other, yea, that there is no spiritual duty, wherein the flesh (though not alwayes in such a prevalent degree,) doth not shew some active resistance.

2. That all the stirrings, and motions of the flesh have still a tendency, congruous to their own nature, to turn the heart carnal and to alienat it from God, so as it is easy to discern, how in these the rise and the end do throughly correspond.

3. That this is a cruel taskmaster if once it bear sway; imperious in its command, and violent in its pursuit, so that their experience may herein tell, its a sore, and an intolerable thing for a servant to bear rule.

4. That to things most forbidden the flesh moveth most impetuously, so, as it will even break through the hedge, though sure thereby to be scratcht with thornes, yea, it is oft so eager in its pursuit, that it will follow the bait, while the hook is most discernable.

5. That when once this doth swell, and wax fat; they may upon another interest cry, *woe's us, our leanness*, for like the scales of the ballance, they find a proportionable abatement and depressing of their spiritual life, as the flesh goeth up, yea, they have cause to know how every step of their heart going forth to the World is a step that doth put them further off from God.

9. That the more closely the Law is prest in its spiritual extent, yea, the more spiritual a duty is, the more fully opposit they find their carnal heart, and though the flesh may bear up a little with the forme

of

Religion, and hath more complacency with that way, which lieth moſt in externals, yet it cannot endure the power thereof, it can ſuffer men to be Hypocrites, but not truely Chriſtians.

7. To reſtrain, and bring this under bondage they find that it doth put the ſpirit ſo much at liberty, which getting looſe reins for a litle will leave the ſoul work for many dayes, and with ſad after groanes pay backan houres pleaſure, yea, they alſo know, when the outward man is low, and upon a ſenſible decay, it hath not then hindered but rather effectually helped their inward joy, and ſtrength.

8. That indulgence to the flesh cauſeth a ſenſible thick interpoſition between Heaven and the ſoul, whence they are ſo clogged, and hampered in their flight, and motion toward God, yea, thus have often their choiſeſt duties been made a ſore, and grievous task.

9. That this is the true riſe of their uſual perturbations, and doth ſtill put ſome jar betwixt them, and their lot, and doth hinder a ſatisfyed enjoying of that which they have, through murmuring at that they want, yea, they know, that to pleaſe the flesh hath been oft the cauſe of their greateſt grief, and diſpleaſure.

10. They alſo find how the defilement of their ſpirit, doth help to darken it, which overgrown with the flesh, can have no clear diſcovery of ſpiritu l things, but the more ſeparat from the body, and purged from theſe groſſe dregs, they find themſelves at a further advantage to converſe with divine truths, which thus they get diſcovered, beyond all all that nature can reach.

II. *That the heart of man is deceitful, and deſperatly*

ly evill, Jer. 17: 9. Jer. 4: 14. Prov. 4: 23. *Is a Scripture truth, where to the Christians experience* doth answer, as the face answereth to its selfe in the glasse, yea we may say it is so clearly demonstrat to these who were ever serious, about their inward case, that while they thus read the Word in themselves and are made to read themselves in the Word, they may with wonder acknowledge, that he, which can sound this great deep of the heart, and drawe so vive a portraicture thereof, is surely one before whom all things are manifest; who doth search, and try the reins, and know what is our mould, and fashion; this is one of the very first lessons which practical Religion doth teach, and the more nearnes with God, and further measure of grace, that is attaind, the more clear discovery there will be of this; O! what sad houres, what bitter complaints, hath it caused? This oft doth marre the Christians feast, and mingle their Wine with Gall, and wormwood; I am sure if that excellent company of the Saints, who have been from the beginning to this day could be brought together, to give in their suffrage, and witnes concerning the deceitfulnes of the heart, there would be one joynt testimony to this truth; we should find that Enoch who walkt with God, Moses with whom he spake face to face, that beloved servant, who leaned in Christs bosome, and he who was caught up to the third Heavens were no strangers thereto, but could witnes thus.

1. That it is within which aileth them most, and their greatest adversaries are men of their own house, yea, that in the worst of times, there is still more cause to complain of an evill heart, then of an evil, and corrupt World, there being no worse company, then they are oft to themselves.

2. That no time of their life, but might give them,

ſome further proof, that they are fooles who truſt their own heart, which oft will eſcape and over-reach their quickeſt reflexion, even when both their eyes are on it; yea, that there is no time that alloweth the putting off their armour, or to diſmiſſe their guard, not the beſt caſe, the greateſt eſtabliſhment in grace, nor the evening of the day, though they were within ſome minutes of the crown, and compleat victory, doth priviledge them from the experience of a deceitful heart.

3. That under the beſt frame they find there will often lurk that which after-time doth diſcover that for the preſent though it had been told, they could not have believed, until frequent experience maketh them ſee that the Word knew their heart better then themſelves.

4. That to bring home their heart when once it goeth abroad, or recall the liberty they have given it, is not eaſy, which doth no ſooner parley with a temptation at a diſtance, adventure to ſport therewith, but it quickly turneth to earneſt, and is ready to yeeld.

5. They know the conſtant need to have a watch upon their ſenſes, and to make a Covenant with their eyes, which doe quickly betray their heart; ſo eaſy it is to be deceived, yea, to grow warm, and to take need-fire upon the ſmalleſt touch.

6. How quickly alſo their ſpirit doth ſlacken, and loſe its benſil even in the greateſt advantage of their caſe, their experience can tell, that when in ſome meaſure they have been raiſed up in any ſpiritual enjoyment, they were then in hazard to be lift up to the wind, and to have their ſubſtance diſſolved in the more ſolid part of Chriſtianity.

7. Wha

7. What a ſight have they ſometime of themſelves, ſuch as would be a terrour to them, if the heart and motions thereof could be writ out to the view of others, or that any were witneſſes to that which in one roome will dwell beſide the grace of God as its door-neighbour.

8. In a word their experience doth witnes, how ſoon the ſtrongeſt reſolutions will evanish, that they are not oft in the evening, what they were in the morning, nor for many houres do they keep the ground they had attained, but Reubens Character unſtable as water, may be ſtil their complaint, yea, I am ſure as many as ever obtaind mercy to know themſelves, can tell that its paſt all reckoning, how oft their heart hath deceived them, when they truſted it moſt: This every day may cauſe them ſit down, and admire the grace of God, which can mend, what they ſo oft marre, and is ſtronger to ſave, and preſerve, then they are to deſtroy.

III. That as there is a body of death within, they alſo know there is, *An adverſary without*, *Eph.* 6: *v.* 12. 1. *Pet.* 5: *ver.* 8. *Ioh.* 8: *v.* 44. whoſe way, and devices, and method of tempting doth moſt exactly anſwer the diſcovery of the Word; this is indeed a truth, which Chriſtian experience in all ages doth witnes, that no ſooner they had a ſerious look after God, but found themſelves purſued by an inviſible party whoſe approaches though ſpiritual, are yet certain, and moſt ſenſibly demonſtrated, beſide that which the Word doth clearly teach; yea it is ſure none of the ſaints were ever priviledged from ſuch experiences, for herein doth the Chriſtians warfare lye; but O how ſweet may the evening be while they ſit down, and can ſing that ſong, *Our ſoul hath eſcaped*

as a bird from the fowler. I shall here give in something of the godly mans experience, which can bear witnes to this.

1. That there is surely an other party then the World, or themselves, with which they have to doe, an invisible adversary without, whom they perceive by that sensible correspondence he keepeth with their heart within, by these violent inroads, importunat solistations, these impetuous motions, wherewith they are so strangely hurried, and oft driven over light, and judgement, yea, over their strongest resolutions, so as he may be as discernable to them, and that there is something therein beside themselves, as if they conversed with him in an outward visible shape.

2. That since the time when they begun to look after God, and to know any thing of his work upon their spirits they have been acquainted with most affrighting, dreadful temptations, and do now perceive his rage, and violent pursuit to bring them back which they knew not before, when at peace with their idols, and sinfull way.

3. That the mark he levelleth at, to which his usual temptations have a tendency, is their soul, and inward man, to hinder communion with God, and to turn their heart off from him, to break the Law, and lay aside commanded duties.

4. That his ordinary approaches to the heart are oft by a very small thing, he needs no more but an open door, or a sinful look for the dispatch of a temptation, and knoweth by a wound in the eye, how to carry death in, to the soul.

5. That he is such a party as knoweth his time and opportunity, can change his weapons, and busk the hook with divers baites, and yet he is alwayes at hand

whe

when the heart is lifted up, when they are out of their duety, and in a carnal frame, to put in then with ſome temptation, and fiſh in ſuch a drumly water.

6. That his way doth truely anſwer his name, *Spiritual wickedneſſe in high places*, this being ſo diſcerned, by daily experience that he hath the advantage of the ground, is a moſt ſubtile obſerving adverſary, who lieth in the dark to us, while we are in the light to him, and knoweth how to correſpond with our corruption, and to ſuit his temptation to our natural temper (wherewith he is well acquainted) and to our calling, and our company, to the preſent ſtrait, to our predominant inclination and to our retirement, and ſolitude, yea that he is one who knoweth how to follow in, and ply with ſuch a gale, when we are in hot bloud, or in any diſtemper, and diſcompoſure of ſpirit.

7. That he can tranſform himſelf into an Angel of light and ſute his temptations to the ſpiritual exerciſes, and enjoyments of the ſaints; that there are temptations on the right hand as well as the left, which are ſo refined, and ſo like a Chriſtian exerciſe, that they can ſcarcely diſcern the weed from the flower, and moſt dreadful errours from the choiſeſt truths, to which they oft have a great reſemblance, though at laſt it doth appear that the native tendency even of the moſt ſpecious errours in the judgement is to looſnes in practice, and to make men religiouſly irreligious.

8. That he is alſo a roaring lion, which they have oft proved by the dreadfull blaſphemous injections, theſe fiery darts which are thrown in with violence, wherewith there is no concurrence of the inclination or conſent, but a diſcernable force put upon them, aſſaulting them with moſt horrid Atheiſticall

thoughts, even while their heart doth riſe with abhorrence, and enter their diſſent againſt the ſame.

9. That he is a moſt reſtleſſe adverſary who is going ſtill about and giveth no ceſſation, but with purpoſe to return at ſome greater advantage; and is no leſſe terrible in his flight then in his aſſault, and that he can ſpeak out of a friend as well as out of a foe, yea, and doth then moſt dangerouſly tempt, when the temptation is leaſt ſeen, or diſcovered.

10. That his temptations doe not only drive at engadging of the heart to bring ſin to the thought, but alſo the bringing it forth to the act, for putting ſome blot upon their walk, and converſation.

11. That he is one who is overcome by reſiſtance, and doth flee before theſe that withſtand him, which they have oft proved, that they have returned from prayer with the ſpoyl of their adverſary, and at ſuch a time have been made to wonder, how that which hath oft foyled them, ſhould have been their temptation.

13. They alſo find by frequent obſervation that though he is moſt ſubtile, being indeed one who through long experience, and continued practice hath attained a great deal of dexterity in tempting, yet, that he hath one uſual method, and ſuch devices which the ſerious Chriſtian, by daily experience, & watchfulnes, may eaſily diſcern, and perceive his temptations in their riſe, and at a diſtance while they are as it were, creeping up the wall; yea thus in ſome meaſure he may find out the depths of Satan, and know how to avoid the net ſpread by that great fowler.

IV. *That the promiſes of the Word which are held forth to the Godly* for their uſe, and encouragement while

while they are in the way, *have a certain accomplishment*, and are a ſafe ground to adventure upon, and worthy to be credited, is a truth tried in all ages whereto experience of the ſaints can give a large teſtimony.

Now in ſpeaking to this grave ſubject, it is not needfull to ſpeak any thing of the nature, and diverſe kinds of promiſes, nor whence it is that we live at ſo poor a rate, and ſo uncomfortably while ſuch a well as this, is at our hand, for its eaſy to read the cauſe within our ſelves, we ſow ſparingly, and venture little out, therefore we have ſo ſmall an increaſe; there is a price for wiſdome, but it is in the hands of fools who have no heart thereto, but this doeth not concern us here, for I only aime to hold out this, that the promiſes which God hath given his People in the Scripture, are of unqueſtionable verity, and have as reall, and ſure performance in the ſaints experience, as they are ſure of that which cometh moſt neceſſarly to paſſe, by the worke and concurrence of natural cauſes as that the fire doth burn, when combuſtible matter is added, or the ſun riſe after its going down; for indeed this truth is ſo manifeſt, proved by ſuch innumerable experiments, amidſt the various changes of a Chriſtians condition, that we might ſummond as many witneſſes as have been followers of God in the World, which are not a few, who in all ages have put the promiſes to an eſſay, and put their ſeal thereto that God is true; yea, to ask at ſuch, if they know whither there be a truth in Scripture promiſes, that cometh not to paſſe, I think were to enquire at a living man, whither he ſeeth, and feeleth, or if there be ſuch a thing as motion, ſince they have as ſure, and ſenſible a demonſtration of the one, as he hath of the other.

But ere I speak any thing particularly to this, I would first premit some things to clear what we understand here, by the saints experience of the truth of the promises, in these following considerations.

1. We would consider, though the Scripture hath here it's accomplishment, and is intended for the use of the Church, and every particular Christian, while on the way in his militant condition, yet there are some promises of the Word yea, the greatest, which belong to the saints, that will not be fulfilled, until they have cast off their armour, and are called to divide the spoyl, their experience of which, will be the high prize of the calling of God in Christ, whereof all which they enjoy is but an earnest.

2. We would consider that the great intent of the Scripture, and promises thereof is not for contemplation, but that we may know them by experience, and drive a blessed trade, and commerce therewith, the merchandize of which is better nor that of gold, for here lyeth the Christians life in the World, yea, it is a great part of their talent, the promises, which are not to be laid up in their heart, and memory, as in a napkin, but they must give an account what experience they have gained thereby, and thus the diligent hand should make rich.

3. What ever be the different syzes, and degrees of experience among the saints, according to their grouth, and age in Christ, yet it is certain that the meanest who have interest in the promises, and did ever grip them in earnest and put them to trial must know something of the performance of the same in their own case; for the Lord doth not suffer his work in his People to want a seal.

4. The godlies experience hereof, is then much made out, when they are much in observation, and we

we know little of the truth, and performance of the promiſes, becauſe we are not more habitually in a frame to obſerve; thus he goeth by, and we perceive not; but they never wanted confirmations, who were ſeriouſly ſeeking to be confirmed in the truth of the Word.

5. The ſpecial mercies, and providences of a Chriſtian life, are a certain return of the promiſe, & in that way do meet them, as the proper channel of their conveyance; for they are the ſure mercies of the Covenant, and how refreſhful is it, that all the ſeverall caſes of the Saints, and their outgate thereof, their meaneſt as well as their greateſt neceſſities, are comprehended in the Word, and under ſome promiſe, and were all forſeen in his everlaſting view, who hath ſo marvellouſly ſuited the ſame to all that his People ſtand in need of, as if it had been directed to ſuch, and ſuch a Chriſtian only.

6. This helpeth to make the mercies of the godly man to have a peculiar, & ſweet relish, & to be ſome way twice his mercy, when he gets them in ſo immediat a way reached to him as it were out of the promiſe, and as an obſervable return from Heaven, when thus the Lord ſealeth his Word to him by his work, and the way of the Word he findeth hath been the way of his comfortable outgate; that when he hath had no other eſcape, but to turn in to the promiſe, and to caſt himſelf upon it, he gained this experience; he truſted in God, and was helped, and can give in this teſtimony of him, that he hath both ſpoken it, and himſelf alſo hath done it, according to his Word.

7. It is not any extraordinary thing, we here underſtand, by the Chriſtian mans experience of the

truth of the promises, it is not a rapture or revelation, or such as some of the Saints have upon some singular, and special account had; for we have no any promise for these things, but it is something, well grounded upon the Word, which constantly holdeth in the Lords ordinary way of procedure with his People, according to the tenor of the Covenant, for his Word doth good to them that walk uprightly, and doth certainly take place in the experience of every serious and diligent Christian.

8. This is not the testimony of a few, but the record of all the Saints since the beginning, whose experience doth all most harmoniously agree, and bear one witnes that he is faithful who hath promised, & it is not that which a Christian hath found once, or twice in his life, but the dayly food of such as live by faith.

9. This doth put a strong obligation on the godly man to the Word, for the time to come, for these who have tryed it often, may with much confidence trust it, in the day of their strait.

10. The experience which the godly hath of the real performance of the promises is a most convincing evidence of his state in Christ, it is the earnest, and pledge of the inheritance, and full accomplishment of that which remaineth, that the Lord will make perfect what concerneth him, who hath been his help hitherto, and will be his exceeding great reward in the end, who hath made him find so much of the gain of godlines, here by the way.

Now having premitted these things, I shall here instance some particular promises, wherein the Christians most usual trade, and commerce doth ly, and to which they give in their seal and witnes; I confesse if all these proofs which the Saints have had

of the fulfilling of the promiſes could be gathered together, we might make uſe of that Divine hyperbole, *The World could not containe the bookes that ſhould be written thereof.* O, what an admirable volume, what an excellent commentary, and copy ſhould this be of the Scripture, to ſee it thus turned over into the experience of every Chriſtian; it would be ſome way as eaſy to number the drops of rain, and dew ſince the creation, as to reckon, all theſe pretious drops, and emanations of love, theſe ſenſible returns, and outmakings of the promiſe, which they have had in their experience; I truely think it could hardly be believed, though it were told, what ſome of the godly, here, have found in the way of the Word; but it is ſufficient, to anſwer the deſign of this work, to ſhew that there is a ſenſible demonſtration, and performance of Scripture promiſes, concerning which the experience of the Saints in all ages doth aggree; that by many confirmations the Lord hath oft ſealed the truth thereof to their ſouls.

There are 10. ſpecial promiſes, held forth to the godly in the Word, which I ſhall here inſtance, and therewith hold forth, what a clear teſtimony their experience can give, of the undoubted truth, and accomplishment of the ſame.

FIRST. Inſtance, is that promiſe given to believing, to ſuch who credit the naked word, when there is no probable appearance of its outmaking, and thus give God the glory of his faithfulnes, which we have expreſly held out. 1 *Chron.* 20: 20. *Pſ.* 118. 7. 8. *Ioh.* 1. 50.

To clear the accomplishment of this promiſe, I ſhall but appeal to that teſtimony the ſaints in all ages have

have left thereof, yea to the present experience of the godly at this day, if they have not certainly found it so.

1. That when in a particular they have trusted God therewith and got their spirit quiet in a recumbency on him, he hath dealt with them according to his word, yea if then from cleer convincing returns of the promise they have not been made to say, it did never repent them, that they gave more credit to the testimony of God, then of their own hearts.

2. That they have not found a more sweet, and observable issue, then, when their help lay most immediatly on the word alone; never a more sensible outgate then when least of sense, and most of faith was in carrying them through, when little of the creature, and much of God appeared in their mercy, and where they were at the lowest, no way of escape but to throw themselves on the promise; they have then had the best retreat, yea, their supply as sensibly felt, as their need, and burden had formerly been.

3. That their greatest difficulties, and shakings anent the promise have helped to their further confirming, and establishment, so as they can say, the Lords way, by brangling them first, yea, to their sense loosing their grip, hath helped to fasten it better, and that which for the time did speak their case most helpelesse, hath made way for his more eminent appearance, and manifesting of himselfe.

4. That their greatest venture, and giving most out hath usually had the richest income, the most eminent experiences of their life, have followed the most adventurous acts of their faith, yea, upon an after reckoning they have oft found, that their adventuring of life, estate, and credit on the promise of God, even

even in these things, hath very obſervably been their upmaking.

5. That where they have moſt been a friend to their faith, there hath faith alſo been moſt a friend to them, in their ſtanding to the credit of the promiſe, over the belly of greateſt objections, and falſe reports raiſed thereof, they have found a very evident mark of Gods reſpect to the ſame, cauſing them to ſee, that he will honour ſuch who thus honour him. And it is indeed worthy of a remark, what we have of Caleb upon record, that he took part with the promiſe of God againſt that diſcouraging report which then was raiſed of the Anakims, and their walled cities; and therefore the inheritance of the Children of Anak was given to Caleb, and his ſonnes, in their lot, from the Lord.

6. That believing doth alwayes make way for ſenſe, and in their cloſing with the naked Word of promiſe, they have not wanted the ſeal of the Spirit of promiſe, but have found a ſweet calm, their burden ſenſibly eaſed, when once they got it laid over on the word, which they can ſay hath been their firſt reſting place, like the very fixing of the motion of the needle towards its right point, when their ſpirit had been reſtleſſe, and in greateſt agitation.

7. That theſe greateſt diſappointments, which their hope in the Word ſeemed to have, they have found afterwards moſt to their advantage, when their returns have not only been according to their faith, but have often exceeded their adventure, and been far beyond what they believed, yea, that from frequent experience they may ſay, the iſſue of truſting the Word, how long ſo ever they thought it deferred, yet, came alwayes in ſeaſon, was never too late and out of time.

8. That

8. That this did never occasion bitter reflexions, or was their upcast before the World, that they trusted God in a day of strait and were not helped; but this testimony have all such left, who have most credited it in a dismal houre, that none should scarr after them to hazard upon such a hand, and venture on the promise, for, their faith hath oft taken them well, and comfortably through, where both sense, and reason have been ready to sink.

SECOND Instance, Whereby we may see the performance of the promise in Christian experience is this, *That God truely heareth prayer*, is near unto his People in what they call upon him, agreeable to his Word, and will answer their desires, we have this promise most expresse, *Phil.* 4: *v.* 6. *Psal.* 32: *v.* 6. *Psal.* 65: 2. *Psal.* 91: 15.

Now the accomplishing of this piece of Scripture is so very clear, that I can atteſt the experience of all the generation of the righteous, since the beginning, what frequent and unanswerable confirmations they have got of this truth in their Christian walk, so that I am sure, no man ever was in earnest in the matter of Religion, and a stranger to this; yea, that he was never more certainly perswaded of any thing, then of this that God doth hear prayer. O if mens souls were but in their souls stead whose evening wrestlings, and teares, the Lord hath oft turned into a morning song, they should know this is no deluſion. I shall here touch something of that experience which by many proofs the saints can give as a witness to this promise.

1. That when they have oft with *Hanna* gone in before the Lord in the bitternes of their spirit, they have

have been made to return with a ſenſible, and marvellous change in their caſe; yea, when in going about prayer, they have been put to wreſtle with much diſtemper, and deadnes, they have oft ſeen the wind diſcernably change, and therewith their ſpirits lightned from under that burden, an obſervable calme, and ſerenity after much inward perturbation, yea they can ſay, that they have found their hearts thawed, and put in a flush of tendernes, upon the back of a moſt ſenſible reſtraint.

2. That acceſſe, and liberty to poure forth their ſouls to God when he hath filled their mouth with arguments, and inabled them both to wreſtle, & wait, they have found a favourable *Criſis* and begun outgate, yea, the very turn of a ſad caſe, which they have got from the Lord, as the pledge of a further anſwer, and that when he thus prepareth the heart, he doth cauſe his ear to hear,

3. That when they have been under a moſt dark cloud, they have found their sky clear, have got a very ſenſible taſte of Gods acceptation in prayer and of his taking their ſute off their hand, even while the matter was ſtill in dependance before him, yea that they have oft had ſuch a ſatisfying impreſſion of Gods minde, and perſwaſion of his anſwering their deſire, as hath helped them cheerfully to wait, yea ſometimes to ſing the triumph before the victory.

4. That when they had been much in prayer, they muſt alſo ſay, it hath been the time wherein the ſpirit hath flowrished, was moſt lively, yea then they had their beſt dayes, then, the candle of the Lord shined upon their pathes, and his dew lay all night upon their branches, and they have found there is an evident, and proportionable abatement of their ſpiritual life, and encouragement in God, according to their wearing out in the exerciſe of this duety.

5. They

5. They have many times found, that when there was nothing left them, but to turn in to God, & they knew of no other way to come through but to pray, and look up, they never found a more ſweet, and ſeaſeaſonable outgate; ſo that moſt obſervable times of prayer, have been alſo the moſt obſervable times of their experience, and they can ſay from many proofs, it is no hopeleſſe buſſines, which is put over upon God by prayer, though there be ſmall outward appearance.

6. That it is not in vain to follow out a ſute before the throne, but acceſſe and moyen in Heaven is as ſure a way to come ſpeed (which they know well) as greateſt moyen upon earth; having ſo evidently found, while many ſeek the rulers favour, that the determination of every thing is from the Lord.

7. That prayer with quiet onwaiting in the uſe of meanes winneth comfortably through, where overcaring, and carnal policy, in the uſe of all other ſhifts hath been forced to ſtick.

8. They know by experience that as there are judicial times, wherein an inhibition as it were is laid on them from the Lord, in their wreſtling, yea and a ſore reſtraint on their ſpirits, which hath been very ſenſible, ſo alſo they have found times of more eaſy acceſſe, and abundant liberty, a ſpirit of prayer let forth, before ſome ſpecial mercy, and deliverance to the Church, whereby they could in ſome meaſure diſcern its neer approach.

9. That on the back of ſome ſolemn addreſſe, and application to God by prayer, and faſting in a day of ſtrait, they have oft ſeen cauſe even from that day, and upward to date a remarkable return, and outgate, in which even common obſervers might diſcern what an evident anſwer the Churches interceſ-

ſion

ſion with God in times of extremity hath had.

10. I may adde, the ſaints know this ſo well by experience that ſurely God heareth prayer, even in ſuch, and ſuch a particular, that they can with much confidence adventure, and make an earand of the meaneſt, as well as their greateſt concernments to him, having ſo oft tried, and found that ſeriouſnes, and ſincerity in addreſſe to God was never in vain, but what ever be the times, therein this promiſe taketh place, their heart ſhall live that ſeek God.

THIRD Inſtance Is the promiſe of the Spirit, and powring out of the ſame, which we have clear in the Word, *Iſ.* 59. v. 21. *Ioh.* 14: 16, *Luk.* 24: v. 49. *Rom.* 8: 16, 16.

The accomplishment of which is ſo manifeſt, ſuch a ſenſible demonſtration thereof, in the experience of the ſaints that I am ſure this can no more be denyed, then theſe who are warmed with the heat of the ſun can deny their ſenſe, and feeling, that the ſun hath ſuch an influence: and doth not the Chriſtans ſpiritual walk bear as convincing a witnes to the fulfilling of thls promiſe, as any living man, by walking in the way sheweth that he hath a ſoul, and principle of life within him. Now to demonſtrat this a litle I would but touch ſome of the ordinary experiences of the ſaints therein, which they doe teſtify andby clear undenyable evidences know to be no deluſion.

1. That which cauſeth ſo real a change upon them, which maketh them alive to God, who once were dead, creating them as it were of new, that which bringeth a clod of eath ſo near Heaven, raiſeth ſo far

above themselves to a delightful converse with things not seen, that while their place, and abode is here, their company, and fellowship is above; that which maketh all things new to them and doth so far change their nature, and inclination as causeth them finde more sweetnes in a spiritual life then in the pleasures of sin, yea, reconcileth them with the Law, and exercises of a Christian, where once there was such contrariety, O! is not this a real effect of the Spirit, and no imaginary thing;

2. That whereof they were altogether ignorant, when they were strangers to God, and knew not if there was a Holy Ghost, but by report, now, since their being born again they finde themselves entred in another World, brought out of darknes unto a marvellous light, and of this are sure, that once they were blinde, but now they see, is not this a proof of the truth of this promise?

3. That which maketh them see more of God in his Word, and Works, at one time then at another; whence is this difference, and inequality, the Scriptures are at one time the great things of the Law, which are at an other time, but common things to them; the object is the same, but O! what different manifestation thereof? whence is it that such a light springeth up in the Word, that openeth up this deep, and maketh them see the wonders of his Law, and within a little nothing but dark night, doe not the saints know this well, and that it is no delusion?

4. That which maketh such sensible liberty in their soul, and confidence in their approach to God, after sore bondage, and fear, which raiseth them often so far above their ordinary frame as they are not only quickned, and refreshed themselves, but do observably

vably warm others, O how piercing, and savory are their words, which shew what difference there is oft, betwixt a Christian, and himself, betwixt a dead exercise of a gift which reacheth the ear, and that which melteth the heart, and doth even reach by-standers, with a pleasant perfume.

5. That which maketh such a sudden change in their case under ordinances, that their heart that died within them as a stone, ere ever they were aware hath taken life, and needfire with a Word, yea, hath been powred out within them so as their beloveds voice hath had an other sound; O then they think not the time long, the Word is as the honey from the comb, so as they have oft wisht a perpetual arrest upon their spirit in such a condition, that none may stirr up their beloved until he please; can that be any delusion?

6. That which bringeth in promises seasonably into their minde in the day of their strait, and causeth the Word tryst so suitably to their present case with such a satisfying impression of the same, as doth give most sensible, and present ease.

7. That which so clearly by the Word discovereth to men their own heart, and doth search them out in their most closse and retired thoughts, that they have been oft made to wonder, how the Word is upon all their secrets; is not this the candle of the Lord?

8. That which doth demonstrat their state and being in Christ, by an argument which is beyond all words, and doth by power in an irresistible way answer all objections, and turn the most froward case into a blessed calme, and hath made a simple word more effectual in a moment, then most perswasive arguments could be.

9. That which maketh such abundant joy spring

up in the heart, when there is no visible grounds for the same, like the dry bone gushing out water, must surely be some supernatural, and excellent power, that can not only bring it out of nothing, but out of contraries.

10. That which giveth them so sensible a taste of the powers of the World to come, such a ravishing glance of the inheritance, that they could hardly sometime forbear to rise at midnight and sing for joy in the hope thereof, and hath given them such a discovery of God at some special times, as hath made them judge that all they ever knew of him before, was but by the hearing of the ear.

11. That which is so discernable, and sensibly felt in the present time, that Christs return to the soul, and the outletting of the spirit, hath been as evident oft to the saints, as to that Martyr who was forced to cry out at the stake, *He is come, he is come*; and hath been so sweet when enjoyed, that the remembrance of some of these times hath been very pleasant, and refreshing, yea this is such a thing as most observably trysts the godly man in the way of his duety, according to the Word.

12. That is no delusion, the withdrawing whereof is so sensible to them, as it maketh their duety wherein they have had delight, become their burden, when they are put to row with oares, the wind being gone, and maketh it like night to the soul, when the sun is gone down, & sad experience hath oft shewed them, how the overclouding of their soul, the withdrawing of the spirit, and comforter, doth observably follow a sitting up of their duety, and yeilding to any known sin, by which it is grieved.

FOURTH Instance, is that Promise for direction which

which God hath given his People in the Word, that he will guide them with his Counsel, will order, and direct their steps, who doe commit their way to him, and teach them the way that they shall chooſe, *Pſ.* 37 : 5 : *Pſ.* 25 : 9, 14. *Pſ.* 73 : *ver.* 24.

The fulfilling of which hath been ſo manifeſt to theſe who ever made earneſt of acknowledging God in their wayes, and committing the conduct thereof to him, that I shall but atteſt their experience, if they have not this teſtimony to give.

1. That to truſt God with their caſe, and give him the guiding of their way, hath taken them much more eaſily through a plunging caſe, then overcaring anxiety, yea, the Lords directing their ſteps, and making things ſucceſsful, when they have committed the ſame to him, hath been often as ſenſible to them, as their ſtrait, and difficulty was.

2. That the way of the word hath been the beſt expedient for taking them ſafe, and comfortably through, and that they never repented that they did more conſult their duty, then inclination, when they were at a ſtand about a particular, and did not debate the command, even while there ſeemed a lion in the way.

3. That they were never left without counſel, and direction, when their eye was ſingle, and ſerious about it, and it was not ſo much want of light as of an heart to cloſe therewith, that made their way oft ſo dark, but when they ſubjected themſelves to Gods minde, they found, that ſuch who follow him, ſhall not walk in darknes.

4. That light, and counſel doth tryſt men in following the command, and the practice of known duety, hath helped them to know more their duety,

and that light did most abound when it was their serious study to follow the same.

5. They found it was never in vain to enquire after Gods mind by prayer, and also in the temple to make a reference of a particular to him, when it was too hard for them, but have often seen the Word evidently directed to such, and such a case, as if they had gotten a return from Heaven by an audible voice.

6. They also know, that Gods following in light, with a powerful impression, his teaching the reines, and instructing with a strong hand is no delusion, but the sure, and well grounded experience of most solid Christians in all ages, yea, most discernable from any false impulse, and that some special piece of work and service, which God hath layed in their way, wants not usually some special call, backed with such light, and authority, as in an irresistable way, can answer all objections, to make them go bound in the spirit, about such a duety.

7. How Gods special directing hand, hath been oft very observable, not only in preventing, and crossing their way, to withdraw them by some sharp dispensation, from their purpose, but sensibly overpowering them, so that they have been plucked as it were back, from unavoidable hazard, that they could not finde their pathes.

8. I shall adde, they have oft observably found, how easy their way was made to them when the Lord doth countenance, and prosper the same; what sweet concurrence of providences, how then difficulties have most sensibly been taken out of the way, yea, winde, and tyde going along with them, in such a manner, that they have been forced to see, and confesse a divine hand therein.

FIFTH

FIFTH Instance, is the promise of Pardon, and forgivenes which God hath given his People in the Word, that for his names sake he will blot out their iniquity, and remember their sin no more, yea, is ready to pardon, which is expresly held forth, to these who are truely humbled, *Mic.*7:18. *Ier.*31. 34. *Is.*43:25.

Now that there is a real accomplishment of this, I am sure the experience of the saints can in all ages clearly witnes, what joy and peace this hath occasioned, what a sensible demonstration, and solemn confirmations they have had of this promise, so as their very bones might sing; *Who is like unto thee, O Lord!* It is true real pardon of sin doth not alwayes inferre the sensible feeling thereof, and when it is remitted in Heaven, there is not alwaye a declaration of it in the conscience, but it is also sure, that this is sensibly felt, and that it is tryed by all even all the generation of the righteous to have had as powerful an operation on a disquiet, troubled soul, as ever wine, or the choiseſt cordial could have on the sick, or faint; O! if these who question this, were in their case, to whom God speaketh peace after a storm, they should know how real, and certain that is: I would offer the Christians witnes to this promise, from many, many experiments, by which the Lord hath sealed it to their soul, whereby they know assuredly it is no fancy, or delusion.

1. How this hath as sensible a connexion with the serious exercise of contrition, and repentance in their experience, as it certainly hath in the word, and promise; while they find, that in silence, and keeping up their case from God, their bones have been troubled, their spirit in a restles, and disquiet condition,

untill once they made an addresse, and got their soul vented by confessing to the Lord which was then like a kindly turn, and cool of a fever.

2. They know it is no deluſion that is found ſo certain a cure to a wounded ſpirit, under the ſenſe of ſin, a wound which the world & all its diverſions could never heal, whoſe pain, & grief no muſick can allay (a drop of divine diſpleaſure being enough to turn all their pleaſures in wormwood, and gall) but, O! a taſte of this unſpeakable cordial, one warming look of a reconciled God, they know by experience, can give preſent eaſe.

3. It is no deluſion which they can command no more, then the ſun to shine when overclouded, or the wind to blow, but when it liſteth, which the moſt perſwading moral arguments, can no wayes effectuat nor all their former experience, yea, the letter of moſt refreshing promiſes, which ſometimes are to them, but as the white of an egge, without taſte, until once the ſpirit breath, which not only diſcovereth the ground of their joy in the word, but doth alſo cauſe them to rejoyce therein, when it shineth upon the ſame.

4. It muſt be no deluſion which cauſeth ſo marvellous a change that after greateſt diſquieting fears, they have found moſt ſenſible manifeſtations of love, the greateſt flood on the back of the loweſt ebb in their ſpiritual condition, which oft hath forced them to retreat, what their feares, and jealouſies did utter; yea, hath made them enquire with wonder, whence they are ſo chearful to day, who yeſternight were ſo broken, and crusht: whence their ſpirit, should be in ſo ſweet a calm, that ſo lately was like the raging, and troubled ſea.

5. That

5. That this hath oft met them, as a bleſt ſurpri-zal, and unexpected welcom, when they have in a backſliding caſe come in to God, they certainly know, that when they knew not how to adventure, and at what end of their raveled condition to begin, counts having run long over, yet on their very firſt addreſſe, have got a ſweet diſappointment to their feares, been helped to their feet, yea, ſome times have had as it were the fatted calfe killed to make merry with their friends.

6. That which hath an audible voice within, ſo ſtrong an impreſſion upon the ſoul, which carrieth with it ſuch a clear ſatisfying diſcovery of Gods heart, and love, is ſurely no deluſion, while the intimation of that one truth, *Your ſins are forgiven*, or any other word of promiſe for that end, they have found to be an argument beyond words, which they could not reſiſt, but for the time, have been as ſure, they ſee, and feel this, as that they live, yea, can no more now call it in queſtion, then formerly they could get it believed.

7. That is no deluſion which cauſeth them with another kinde of freedome, approach to God, maketh them know there is a Spirit of adoption which ſets the ſoul at liberty, from the ſore bondage, and thraldome under which their former backſliding had put them, yea, a thing not only ſenſibly felt by themſelves, but may be diſcerned by others, while they cannot ſmother the joy of their heart or hide in their countenance ſuch a change of their condition, that truely God hath dealt comfortably with them.

8. Hath not this the Saints in all ages witneſſed even a joy unſpeakable, and full of glory which though but of ſhort continuance yet for the preſent ſo ſtrong, as hath ravished their ſoul withthe hope

of the inheritance above, and clear view of their intereſt in it, yea, ſometimes, made them ſing for joy, in expectation of that bleſſed day, but, O! this is better felt then expreſſed.

9. And in a word can that be a deluſion that hath oft turned the poor mans hell into a Heaven, which tryſts the Chriſtian in the way of his duty, and the work doth ſo exactly anſwer the promiſe, moſt ſenſibly felt after greateſt ſhakings of the conſcience by the law, and can make a ſad outward lot, ſo very ſweet, and pleaſant, cauſe them triumph over the wrath of men, to ſing in a dungeon, to abound and have all things under greateſt wants, look grim death chearfully in the face in its moſt dreadful aſpect, yea, doth make ſo great, and viſible a difference betwixt the Chriſtian, and himſelf.

SIXTH Inſtance, Is that promiſe of encouragement, and ſupport under the croſſe, which is expreſly held forth in the Word, that the Lord will own his People, bear their charges, and be with them in trouble in the day of their ſuffering for his truth; yea, will bind up the broken in heart, and heal their wounds. *Pſal.* 91: *ver.* 15. *Iſai.* 43: *ver.* 2. *Cap.* 41. *ver.* 17. *&* *Cap.* 49: *ver.* 14. *Pſal.* 9: *ver.* 9. *Iſai.* 51: *ver.* 12.

Now that this promiſe is a truth, and hath a certain accompliſhment, the experience of the Saints in all ages will witnes, and we know their teſtimony is true, what at ſolemn times of Gods preſence they have had in a barren wildernes, how great a cloud of witneſſes doth ſeal this, and give their teſtimony to the croſſe of Chriſt, of which we may ſay, the fame, and ſweet ſavour hath gone forth, and ſpread abroad through

through the Church, the Fathers have told it to the Children, and one generation to another, but how litle a part thereof can be expreſſed! I think it would be a marvellous record, if the ſuffering, and priſon experiments of the Saints were particularly ſet down, what they have found under the croſſe, but it is well, we know this promiſe hath been, and this day is evidently ſealed, concerning which I dare atteſt the experience of as many as did ever drink of this bleſſed cup, and were counted worthy to ſuffer for the teſtimony of Chriſt, if this be not a faithful, and true witnes.

Firſt that they have oft taſted what communion with God is, in the ſecret dueties of a Chriſtian, alſo in the publick ordinances, and in a ſpecial meaſure, at ſome more ſolemn times, but, O! never knew his preſence and communion with him more ſenſibly then under the croſſe, yea, have found that the work, and ſervice of a ſuffering time, as it is not the ordinary ſervice of every day, hath alſo a peculiar, and more then ordinary allowance.

2. That they never knew divine ſtrength more ſenſibly, then when they have been moſt preſſed above their own ſtrength, that in the day they were caſt on Gods immediat care, and ordinary meanes of their help moſt withdrawen, they had never leſſe cauſe to complain, but might often ſay this as their experience, they thirſted not when he led them through the wildernes, yea, that they have no time of their life, found their mercies more obſervably tryſt them, more ſweet, and ſatisfying, then when by prayer, and beleeving, they were put to digg the well, and wait for the rain coming down to fill it.

3. That they never fouud more true liberty, then in the houſe of bondage, more refreshing company, then

then amidst their greatest solitude, while they found him near, whom gates, and barres cannot shut out, in the day when all things else seemeed to frown upon them, that their midnight songs have been sweeter, then all the prosperity they sometimes enjoyed, and that they have oft proved, that the deeper any are in affliction for Christ, and his truth, they are also the deeper in consolation.

4. They must say the most satisfying, and clear discoveries of the word are under searching, and sharpest trials, that a sanctifyed exercising affliction, they have found one of the best interpreters of the bible, and the word then to be an other thing, then it is at other times; yea, even to have been that to them, which they could desire it to be, so as they are sure it hath been shaped out, and directed for that present plunge their soul was in.

5. That there is a very easy passage and dispatch, betwixt Heaven, and an oppressed afflicted soul, an observable vent by prayer, and more sensible accesse to Gods face, when other things have most frowned, yea, they can witness from experience, he stayeth his rough wind in the day of his East wind. While he shutteth one doore he hath set an other open, that when the storm without hath been very sharp, they have found a sweet calm, and sun-shine within to make it easy, and when he layeth on one sore trial, he will take an other off.

6. They can tell what a sweet comfortable parting, they have oft had, with some sharp trial, which at the first was bitter as death, but in the close, after sanctified exercise under the same, they have found cause to leave it their blessing; and confesse that the time of greatest jealousy, and fear upon their part, they have found on Gods part, hath been a time of greatest

greateſt kindnes, and love, the ſharpeſt woundsfrom ſuch an hand, and heart as his, hath tended to a cure, yea, that circumſtance, and ingredient in the ſame which of all was moſt bitter, and grievous, even there they have found their outgate and encouragement moſt remarkable.

7. That the peculiar advantage of a ſanctifyed trial, is not ſo well ſeen in the preſent time, as afterwards, when the caſe hath altered, then they found a long, and rough ſtorm recompenced at their landing, with a rich loadning of experience, an other kind of diſcovery of God, his way, and the certainty of his word then they formerly had won to; ſo as now they can ſpeak of him, and the good of the croſſe, and adventuring any thing for Chriſt, with ſome greater eſteem, on an other ground, then report, or an hearing thereof by the ear.

8. I ſhall adde what hath been the frequent teſtimony of theſe who ever endured tribulation for the goſpel, that their remembrance, and after reckoning, upon this account hath not been ſad, or bitter, when they ſat down, and compared their gain with their loſſe, their upmaking vvith theſe dayes of trial, that have gone over their head, that they vvould not then exchange their experience, or vvant vvhat they have found by the croſſe, no not for many moe dayes of trouble, and affliction.

SEVENTH Inſtance, is that promiſe of the word which integrity, in an evel time hath, that it ſhall preſerve their ſteps, and be the beſt mean to help theſe through that keep Gods vvay, yea, even in this life ſhall not vvant ſome vvitnes of Gods reſpect. *Pſ.* 18: 25, *Pſ.* 112: 4. *Rev.* 3: 10.

Novv

Novv to hold forth the accomplishment of this, I may with confidence appeal to the obſervation of the ſaints in all ages, vvho ever made it their ſerious ſtudy to keep their garments clean in a time of tryal, if their experience, hath not this teſtimony to give.

Firſt that though at preſent, honeſty in evil times hath brought them in hazard, and vvith Joſeph to a priſon, yet, it hath brought them out alſo, with obſervable advantage, yea, how ever the Lord did order their outgate they have found this did land them well, and alwayes bring them to a comfortable harboury.

2. That honeſty, and faithfulnes hath an authority even on the conſcience of their enemies, and leaveth uſually a conviction upon them: Yea, hath forced a teſtimony, and approbation, from ſuch men, and they have oft found better entertainment, then theſe who in a ſinful way have fought to pleaſe them.

3. They have found this alwayes the choiſeſt expedient, and beſt policy in a dangerous time, which hath obſervably met them, when they had moſt to doe; A thing whereof they have reaped the fruits in the day of their ſtrait, and times of judgement, yea, though it hath occaſioned ſometime their ſufferings, yet it hath been alſo their ſafety, and protection from ſadder ſufferings.

4. That though integrity is oft under a dark cloud of reproach, yet it winneth ſtill well out from under the ſame, and hath shined uſually more bright afterward. So as they might have had cauſe to obſerve, what unexpected meanes the Lord hath made uſe of, for their clearing.

5. That while their enemies might have (were it not

not for the preventing goodnes of God) quarrelled upon ſome other ground, they have been obſervably led to purſue, and make them the but of their malice for their honeſty and that wherein they have peace before God, and have been keeped from hitting on the right cauſe.

6. They finde how unſpeakably ſweet this is upon an after reckoning, and in the eveniug of their life, that then they reap a comfortable harveſt, of that they have ſown with much ſuffering, and teares; O! then it doth not repent them that integrity was their choice.

7. They have ſometime found a hundred fold even in this life, and an obſervable upmaking in that, which they have been willing to loſſe, and hazard moſt.

8. They muſt allo ſay, integrity was never their ruine, but an outgate was oft brought about in a way they could not have expected, yea the Lords shutting all other doores upon them, hath been that he might open one himſelf, like Hagars well ſpringing up in the wilderness.

9. That in making their aime, when they had a large heart for God, they have not then wanted an opportunity for evidencing the ſame, their encouragement hath abounded with their duty, and they have got much in, in giving much out for Chriſt, that there was no ſuch feaſt in the world, as they have ſenſibly found in the teſtimony of a good conſcience.

EIGHT *Inſtance is that promiſe* which is held forth to the Chriſtian in the vvord, *of ſtrengh, and aſſiſtance to go about duties. Iſ.* 40. 29. 30. 31. *Pſ.* 18. 6. 14. *Pſ.* 84. 5. *Pſ.* 68. 28.

To

To clear this, that it hath an unqueſtionable performance, I atteſt the experience of the generation of the righteous; vvho ever knevv what it was to ſerve the Lord in the ſpirit, who by many ſenſible confirmations, have not proven the certainty of theſe things?

Firſt that when they have gone about duty under much deadnes, and ſtraitnes of ſpirit; they have found a very ſenſible enlargement, and got their bonds looſed, which ſurely they could no more command, without the concurrence of divine help, and ſomething above nature, then theſe who ſpread out the ſail can command a fair wind, when it is croſſe.

2. That Gods help, and concurrence, was never more diſcernable carrying them through, & making them ſtrong, then in the day, that, to their own ſenſe, they were moſt weak, when they have gone about duty under greateſt feares, and fainting in ſpirit.

3. That when they had moſt confidence in themſelves, and judged they were at greateſt advantage in their going about ſome duty, they have uſually had the ſaddeſt retreat, and found that a ſure truth, the race is not to the ſwift, nor the battel to the ſtrong.

4. They know well what an influence divine concurence hath, not only upon their inward frame, but alſo upon the exerciſe of their gifts, yea, upon the commoneſt abilites of judgement, and memory, and that there is a moſt remarkable difference, betwixt themſelves at one time, aud an other, according to the blowing of this wind.

5. They muſt alſo witneſs this as their experience, they found duty never more eaſy to them, then when they have had moſt to doe, and were keeped throngeſt therein; yea, when much work vvas laid to their hand, they then wanted not an enlarged allovvance for the ſame.

6. That

6. That their ſpirits have been fitted for duty, and carried through difficulties, where at ſome other time, and in an other frame they would have fainted, and thereby ſeen, that none needs to ſcarr at any piece of duty, when God calleth them to it, for while difficulties have appeared greateſt at firſt, the leſſe they have found them afterward, yea, the hardeſt piece of ſervice oft made moſt eaſy.

7. They finde God doth raiſe the ſpirit of his followers with a ſuitable elevation for their work, and can fit them for the ſervice of that time, and other trials thereof, even beyond their ordinary reach.

8. That there is an open doore, and ſenſible aſſiſtance, when there hath been work for the Goſpel in ſuch a place, while on the other hand they have found an inhibition ſenſibly ſerved on them, the doore as it were ſhut when the tide was going back, and the word of the Goſpel at a ſtand in ſuch a part.

9. That it is not greateſt abilities which make undertakings ſucceſsful, it being in vain to riſe up early without the Lord.

10. It hath oft been their experience, that in following the way of God, his candle did then ſhine upon their paths, the Spirit of the Lord was with them, and ſenſibly let out, the withdrawing whereof hath been no leſſe diſcernable, while they turned aſide from him, that they have then been put to bear the burden alone, and found difficulty, and deſpondency of ſpirit at once growing upon their hand.

11. I may adde what theſe who are ſerious in Religion have oft tried, that there is no ſuch help, and furniture, for going about duties as a ſpiritual frame, and nearnes with God, for then light, and counſel, inward freedome, and ſweet compoſure of ſpirit have brought moſt ſenſible advantage to them, their greateſt,

teſt, yea and in their moſt common undertakings, this hath been very evident.

NINTH *Inſtance, is that great promiſe, we have* Rom. 8. ver. 28. *That all things ſhall work together for good to them who love God, and* Pſal. 25: ver. 10. *All the pathes of the Lord are mercy, and truth to ſuch as keep his Covenant.* I confeſſe it is not eaſy ſometimes to reconcile Gods way and this piece of his Word together, theſe who take only an ordinary paſſing look of providence, cannot well judge, how ſuch things, wherewith oft the godly in their life are tryſted, ſhould contribute to their good, and advantage; while nothing would ſeem more directly croſſe to the ſame; But the Chriſtian, and wiſe obſerver can give another account, they know what a ſure truth this is, that there is no real jarr betwixt the promiſe and providence of God in this matter; and what ever be the preſent thoughts, patient onwaiting hath had cauſe to ſay this,

1. When his way and their thoughts have moſt differed, in the accomplisment of his Word, and bringing about their mercy, they have found it was to their advantage, that his choice was alwayes better then theirs, yea they have been oft made to confeſſe, that their ſaddeſt diſappointments therein have tended to their further upmaking.

2. That the Lords denying them ſome outward thing which they have moſt deſired, they have found (as afterwards hath appeared) was to grant them more then their deſire; he hath refuſed them as it were in an Ishmael, that he might give them an Iſaack.

3. They can oft ſay they had been undone if they had not been undone; that it was their mercy, the Lord

Lord took ſuch a way to caſt them in a fever, to prevent a lethargy, and by ſome sharp croſſe, gave them a wound in the flesh, to cure and let out ſome groſſe impoſtume in their ſoul, which should have made their caſe worſe.

4. How greateſt shakings have helped their further eſtablishment, ſo as they were never more confirmed then in that about which they have been moſt brangled; yea, they have alſo found this the Lords way to cure their frowardnes, and misbeleef by ſome further addition to their croſſe; that when they would not beleeve, he hath cauſed them come in upon a greater diſadvantage, whileas a ſmall affliction hath made them impatient, a more heavy, and preſſing trouble hath been their cure, and helped them to keep ſilence under Gods hand.

5. That the growing of difficulties in their way, and ſome further preſſure in the trial, they have found, it was from the Lord, in order to its removal, and to the bringing forth of ſome greater good, and that all viſible grounds of confidence have been oft broken, but with this upmaking, that their mercy, they had it more immediatly out of Gods own hand, yea that the leſſe moderation was whileſt their trial hath come to an extremity, they have found it then upon the turn, and their hope, and encouragement oft made to ſpring up therewith.

6. How the Lords deferring their mercy which they had oft ſought hath been indeed their mercy, and advantage, which did alwayes tryſt them in the ſeaſon, yea they muſt ſay his way is alwayes neareſt, and waiting on God without making haſte, doth truely make the quickeſt diſpatch.

7. Their experince can alſo witnes, how mens reproach and outing their malice that way to ruine

their reputation, hath oft been the very mean, ordered by the Lord, to bring forth their further clearing, and vindication, even by that very mean.

8. How by some sad crosse he doth oft prevent a sadder, which though strange at first, they have been forced upon after discovery to confesse: The man who riding in haste to the sea port, to have passage over seas with a ship going then off, fell and broke his leg by the way, which was the saving of his life, for the ship, and all its passengers perished in that voyage, yet this was a bitter astonishing providence to him for the present.

9. How their losse even by some sad slip, and failing in their spiritual condition, hath really tended to their further humbling and advantage, yea, that which brought them under some visible decay, as to the wonted lustre of their Christian profession, hath helped them to grow more under ground, to the root, and substantials of Christianity.

10. They can tell how these steps of the providence of God, which seemed most crosse to that design he was carrying on, yea, looked like the very crushing of their hope, have oft been the very mean which hath wrought most effectually to bring about their mercy.

11. I shall adde but this, as the Christians witness to the truth of this promise, that sharpest reproofs they have seemed the wounds of a friend, most pressing straits, made the mean for their further enlargement, how the Lord hath brought them into some dark, and plunging trial, which then looked like a fearful pitt, that he might bring them out with advantage, set their feet on a rock, and establish their goings, yea, that in the hottest furnace, they lost no-

nothing, but what they might well ſpare, even ſome of their droſſe.

TENTH Inſtance I ſhall here ſet down, is *that general promiſe made to Godlines, and theſe who make it their ſerious ſtudy, that it ſhall be great gain, that verily it ſhall be well with the righteous, for they ſhall eat the fruit of their labour, and in keeping of the command there is a great reward*, 1 *Tim.* 6: 6. 1. *Pet.* 3: *v.* 12. 13. *Pſal.* 19. 11.

This is indeed a great concerning truth, but a truth which I am ſure none who did ever make earneſt of religion will call in queſtion; many ſure convincing experiments hath the Chriſtian had thereof through his life, ſuch wants not ſome diary and record, wherein they can caſt up the advantage, they have reaped in cloſſe following of God, and their duty, yea from moſt remarkable providences, they may oft ſay, *This I had becauſe I keeped thy precepts*, now that this promiſe hath a large witneſs I ſhall here touch ſome things which I may with ſome confidence ſay, both in the preſent, and in former times hath been proved, and ſealed by the ſaints in their experience.

1. That they never more effectually conſulted their good, & advantage, then when they did with greateſt ſinglenes conſult their duty, and leaſt with flesh, and blood; they did never more truely ſeek themſelves, then in the practice of ſelf denyal, yea in that they intended God moſt, and leaſt their privat intereſt, they have therein found a very ſenſible upmaking.

2. That a ſerious endeavour to walk before God acceptably they have found ſtill the beſt policy, even in the worſt of time, and have found his way then very ſatiſfying, while it was moſt their ſtudy how to

pleaſe him, yea they have been obliged to confeſſe, that when the Lords way was their choice, they have found it alſo their reward.

3. They have found more real joy & peace in withſtanding temptations, then in any thing the temptation offered, and in laying their intereſt at Gods feet, and their will underneath his, more then in all their carnal enjoyments; O the taſte, & teſtimony of Gods approbation! how ſweet a ſmile is his, in whoſe countenance Heaven lieth.

4. That inward peace, and tranquillity of mind, a ſweet calm, and compoſure of ſpirit, doth as really attend a ſpiritual frame, and walk, as the shadow the body, and their beſt, and moſt comfortable dayes, wherein they have truly walked at liberty, have been when their heart was moſt ſubject to the Law, with a ſingle reſpect to the ſame.

5. That Religion, and a ſpiritual walk is the beſt friend even as to a contented, and comfortable life here in the World, and that they have then moſt acceſſe to enjoy themſelves, and their lot with ſatisfaction, when they enjoy God, yea, that neernes, and communion with him, tendeth to the ſublimating, & refining of their natural ſpirit, and hath been an obſervable help to their very common abilities and parts.

6. That there is truely a reality in the bleſſing, which maketh a ſmall thing ſignify much, and yeeld more, then greater abundance.

7. That when they give God their heart, it is then ſweet, and matter of ſatisfaction to obſerve his wayes, and their obſervation thereof is very refreshing, how far the Lord condiſcends to their deſires when they ſum them all up in himſelf, and make him their delight.

8. That

8. That the pleasure of Religion is in the practice thereof, and the way to have Religion easy, is to be throughly religious, duty is then sweet when men do from an inward principle; and holines should be a more pleasant work, yea, a reward to its selfe, if there were lesse mixture of hypocrisy.

9. That real humility, and walking low in their own eyes, and before God, did never lose to them respect, and credit from men; but self-abasement doth observably go before lifting up, and true honour followeth such, who least hunt after vain applause from the World.

10. That when they were most faithful to observe, & improve a little, for their encouragement, more hath been added, & they never wanted matter to be thankful, when opportunities laid to their hand were improved and taken hold of for that end, yea, they have found there is a mercy within a mercy, and some peculiar mercy in every crosse, which is only found and brought forth by the exercised serious improver of the same.

11. That much sincerity hath also much sense following the same, secret honesty before God hath mett them openly before men, and faithfulnes in Christian freedome purchased them move favour, and respect even from the worst, then when they studied most to please them in a sinful way.

12. That they never saw more clearly the gain, & real advantage of Godlines, & what a difference there is betwixt these that serve God, and these that serve him not, as in a time of trouble, and strait, how then tendernes in their former walk, and that which they entertained in the morning, doth now meet them at night, and pay them home with advantage in an houre of temptation.

13, They have been forced to obſerve that there is an inviſible guard about his People in their duty, that the Miniſtry of the Angels towards ſuch is no deluſion, and have oft been made to wonder how hazard within an hairbreadth hath been prevented; relief & help come as betwixt the bridge, and the water; how they have been ſenſibly preſerved amidſt greateſt dangers, while, as it were, an inhibition hath been ſerved upon theſe, that they ſhould come near, but not hurt, and only mett with them, that they might read their preſervation from them.

14. That an enlarged heart doth meet with an enlarged allowance, and bearing burden with others of the People of God, hath helped to make their own privat burden the lighter.

15, That real Godlines, and Religion, hath as much in hand, as it may be a reward to its ſelf; which beautifieth the ſoul, and maketh the face, and converſation to ſhine with an obſervable luſtre, that guardeth and preſerveth the heart from many vexing croſſes, preventeth ſad ſtroakes, and ſorrowes that others are pierced with, who will follow their idols, and the wayes of ſin, which are bitter in the cloſe.

In a word, this is ſurely found, that God is the beſt friend, and when there is peace with him, things without do not offend, but they ſhall then underſtand what it is to be in league with the beaſts of the field and ſtones of the ground, having a ſweet agreement with all the providences and diſpenſations that come in their way.

V. *That the Scripture threatnings have alſo a certain accompliſhment*, are found to be ſad earneſt, and do not fall to the ground, the Chriſtian can alſo ſeal from his experience.

It

It is not here to be understood the threatnings of wrath (from which beleevers are freed in Christ,) but of a fatherly displeasure, which because of sin, may draw deep, yea, bring forth very dreadful effects, to witnes that it is an evil, and bitter thing to depart from God, and that their own doings shall chastise them; & these threatnings of the Covenant, *If thy children forsake my Law, I will punish their transgression with rods, &c. Psal.* 89: 30. are sure truths which want not in every time a performance.

To clear this (ere I speak any thing particularly) I would premit somethings to be considered.

1. That the word is a perpetual rule, which in every time must take place, & though affliction is a peece of the common misery of man, yet, doth it not arise out of the dust, neither fall out at an adventure, but doth oft visibly follow the tract of sin, as a slouth-hound, pointing at such evils as the cause, by the stroak, and at the truth & fulfilling of the threatnings, written upon both.

2. We should adore his soveraignity whose way both in the measure, and manner of his peoples chastisement is so various, as that none can infallibly conclude, what he is to do in such a case, I mean we are not to limit the Lord to such a way, and method in his working; yet, this we may assert, and firmly conclude, that not only the threatnings of the word have a performance, but men may also have, even beforehand some more then probable conjecture, yea, a clear discovery, what such a case doth threaten, and what will be the issue of a sinful course, by considering the Lords ordinary procedure, both with themselves and others, how sin hath very sad effects, and his way in all ages is still uniforme agreeing with its selve, and with the word.

3. Though a gracious ſtate doth ſurely priviledge from wrath, and condemnation, yet not from affliction, and ſad ſtroaks of divine anger becauſe of ſin; for he taketh vengeance on mens inventions, even when he will ſpare the inventors.

4. The Lord doth oft contend with his People for their folly, and miſcarriages, more ſeverely then with others, and will not let paſſe in them that which he paſſeth by in the World, without being a reprover; but when light, and love, and the Law will not hedge in their way, he will ſet briars, & thornes, before them, yea, ſpeak by chaſtiſement upon their bones, to withdraw men from their purpoſe.

5. It is known, how very deep the holy Anger of God may draw againſt his children, even ſometimes, to purſue them out of the land of the living, & follow them to the grave, with ſome remarkable ſtroak, yea it hath made them dreadful examples of judgment in this life, for whom, he hath accepted an eternal ſacrifice in Chriſt.

6. I ſhall adde, this is the Lords bleſſed end in making out his threatnings againſt his People, that they ſhould not perish with the World. O! what a bleſt exchange is it, that the flaming ſword which once ſtood to guard the tree of life, doth now ſtand as it were in the way of the ſaints, to keep them from running into the pathes of death.

Having premitted theſe things, I ſhall now inſtance, ſome particular evils, wherewith the godly are ready to be overtaken, which the word doth expreſly threaten, and hold forth the hazard of, both as to outward, and ſpiritual ſtroakes, and give in here the Chriſtians witnes from their experience in all ages of the truth of theſe threatnings.

FIRST. *Security, and carnal confidence,* which

we finde the word doth threaten, is an evil wherewith Christians are ready to be overtaken; but they do also know by sad experience, what bitter fruit this brings forth, and that therein the word falleth not to the ground, which is held forth. *Hos.* 2. 1. 9. *Hos.* 7. 9. *Isay.* 30. 16. 17.

First that a secure condition is the usual forerunner of some sad change, that when they are most at ease in a dul, and dead temper of spirit, some sharp rousing dispensation is upon the back of it, either a grosse sin, or a searching crosse, as a thorn in the bed of their security to put them to their feet.

2. That seldom reckoning with the conscience, the running on of counts for some time upon their hand, doth ravel their case, unto a sad confusion and maketh it a bitter, and heartlesse work to retire alone, or withing themselves, yea, hath a most direct tendency to a further hardening, and real upgiving with their duty.

3. That when security, and deadnes groweth within, it quickly maketh them dry up, and wither without, in the external performance of duty, and in that vigorous, lively appearance which did formerly lustre their walk, and carriage before others, so as very bystanders may read the languishing of grace, in the dead exercise of their gifts.

4. That going about duty with most confidence in themselves doth usually give them the most clear discovery of their weakness, yea, when they have least lookt for any crosse, they have then been sure to meet with it with that sad addition, of being a surprizal in a secure condition, whereas on the other hand they may tell, what refreshing disapppintments they have got where some trials have been most feared and lookt for.

5. That

5. That ſecure ſporting with a temptation, may ſoon turn to ſad earneſt, & they have found it very hard to dance about the fire, & not be burnt, & the temptation, which at a diſtance ſeemed ſmall upon a neerer aproach, they have found had moe bands on their heart and was another thing then they could have beleeved.

6. That the meanes whereon they have laid moſt weight, they have alſo found, have given them the ſaddeſt diſappointment, the putting of them in Gods room, and out of their own place hath been the way to cauſe them miſcarry, yea, to turn their croſſe, whereas they have oft ſeen ſome thing unexpected, made the mean of their help, that they might know meanes are ordered of the Lord, and are uſeful, becauſe he maketh them ſo.

7. Their experience can alſo witneſs that carnal confidence deſpiſing the trial at a diſtance, is uſually punished with carnal diffidence, and deſpondency of ſpirit under the ſame, one extremity made the punishment of the other, like the hote, and cold fits of an ague, which doe mutually make one the other more intenſe, yea, that their immoderat confidence and expectation of a thing, hath after reſolved in as immoderat diſcouragement, as their ſtroke.

SECOND. *The Chriſtians unwatchfulnes*, and intermitting in the exerciſe of that ſo neceſſary and commanded duty, we finde the Word threateneth, and holdeth forth the hazard thereof, *Leſt ye enter into temptation*, the outmaking whereof their experience can alſo witnes, *Luk.* 21: *v.* 34 36. *Math.* 26: *ver.* 41.

1. That it is not eaſy to guid their walk, and converſation when their guard over the heart doth ſlacken,

ken, but the giving looſe rains for a little may make ſuch a ſad, and large breach, that many many dayes will not eaſily make up, yea they doe alſo know, how a ſenſible withdrawing of the Spirit, and drying up of their life, and liberty, is the uſual fruit which unwatchfulnes brings forth.

2. That this helpeth to make their ſun-blincks short, cauſeth a low ebbe after the greateſt enlargement, whileſt they doe not guard againſt their peculiar evils, and that uſually there doth haunt ſuch a condition, the ſwelling of the flesh, when the ſpirit is moſt enlarged, which will ſoon put them as far behind, as they formerly thought themſelves at an advantage.

3. That when once the heart lieth open, it is quickly ſeiſed on, and made a prey, with what a bitter ſting doth it return, after it hath taken liberty to wander? yea, doth find there is a ſwift progreſſe that ſin hath from the thoughts to the rolling of it to the imagination, and thence to the affection, wherewith it is more eaſy to engadge, then to shake this off.

4. That unwatchfulnes hath oft turned the moſt ſpecial times, and opportunities for advantage to the greateſt loſſe, which through their neglect of theſe, hath put them further behind then they were, it hath turned their retirement, and ſolitude, to be their ſnare, made the deſert worſe, and more dangerous then the city, and made them finde that vain thoughts the following whereof ſeemeth pleaſant to the mouth, will prove gall, and wormwood in the belly, there being no ſadder company then a mans ſpirit let looſe upon it ſelfe, whileſt they cannot ſtop that current, whereto they had given a vent.

5. Their experience of this can witnes that unwatch-

watchfulnes hath an undoubted tendency to caſt off prayer, how hard is it in the evening to retire to God, whileſt the heart is abroad all the day? To be Religious in Worſhip, when men are not ſo in their walk? Yea they doe find that this will bring their diſtemper within, out at doors to ſome diſorder, impertinency, or paſſion in their words, or outward communication, a thing which experience may tell doth wound the ſoul, make a ſad breach in their peace, and doth quickly overcloud the Spirit, and unfit them for communion with God, and going about of ſpiritual duties.

THIRD. *To reſtrain prayer, and neglect calling on God is an evil alſo which the Word doth threaten*, and hold forth the ſame hazard thereof, as of unwatchfulnes, *leſt ye enter into temptation*, yea, that this is even a ſtep to the caſting off fear, the Chriſtians experience, from frequent trial can witnes, that this Scripture threatning is true, *Math. cap. 26: ver. 41. Job. 15: ver. 4.*

1. That they have found this the riſe, which giveth life, and increaſe to their prevailing evils, and that corruption then is upon a ſenſible growth, as the lively exerciſe of prayer begins to be intermitted.

2. That this weareth out their ſpiritual life, and bringeth a conſumption upon the vital ſpirits of Chriſtianity, ſo that theſe who ſometime flowriſhed, and kept green, as by the ſent of water, that correſpondence which they had with the fountain of their life, while his dew did ly all night on their branches, hath through neglect of prayer been brought to a poor ſhadow; ſo although ſometimes the greatnes of their loſe and diſtemper, hath been hid from themſelves

ſelves, yet, might be eaſily diſcerned by onlookers.

3. That wearing out of prayer, and of delight therein, will quickly make them diſrelish any other piece of Religion, put them out of frame to meditat, or to give thanks, or entertain fellowship with the Saints, yea, the more lively, and ſpiritual theſe are, it maketh them the more a burden, and torment to them.

4. That wearing out of this is a ſtrong temptation to a further forbearance, and will ſenſibly wear them out of any ſenſe of their need hereof, and make them ſtrangers to themſelves and to their own caſe, ſo that they ſhall finde, the leſſe they are in this exerciſe, the further they ſhall be indiſpoſed & the fewer errands they have, the leſſe felt neceſſity of the ſame.

5. Their experience can alſo witnes that litle prayer maketh a heavy burden, doth multiply their ſtraits, and cauſe their care grow as this is abaited; they muſt then bear their burden alone, and with heavines take counſel within themſelves, while they ply not this bleſt tried remedy to make their requeſts in all things known to God.

FOVRTH. We find the Word doth threaten deſection from the truth, and turning from the way of God in a time of trial, as an evil into which, theſe that are kept by grace from final apoſtaſie may yet through the violence of a temptation fall. *Ierem.* 9. *ver.* 13. 15. *Pſal.* 89. *ver.* 30. 32. *Ioſ.* 8. *ver.* 11. and their ſad experience can witnes, the truth of the Scripture threatnings concerning this alſo, vvhile they have found.

1. That in one day they may adventure on that, which through moſt of their life they have not win above,

above, but hath made them go with their back bowed down to the grave; that their giving the Lords work a wrong touch, is one of these things which doth scarcely leave them all their time, but, beyond other sins they have found this still come up with a bitter, and heavy reflexion, yea, in the evening of their life they have found this so sore on their spirit, that it could not ly hid or silent but were forced to witnes their sense of it before the World, ere they could win to any ease.

2. That this the Lord doth usually meet, with some sharp and publick reproof even before men, that though he pardon his People, yea, give some sensible intimation thereof to their souls, yet, he hath not past them, as to some visible mark of his displeasure, because of such a thing.

3. They see that a crooked, and uncleanly way proves not the mean of extricating them out of trouble, but their straits have been made to grow therewith, yea they have found that which they eshewed in Gods way, hath more sadly trysted them in another rod, and that there is a thick dreg in the bottom of the cup, which maketh it worse to drink thereof at the close, then at the beginning.

4. That it is not easy to make a stand in turning aside from the way of God, when once they are engadged, a retrograd motion is very violent, and yeelding in a little will bring with it some necessity of going further, as a judicial stroke.

5. That sitting of some clear opportunity, to give a testimony for the truth, when called thereto, hath turned to be their judgement, that they should not have further accesse, or be made usefull that way; a thing truely obvious to such, as are wise to observe the judgements of God in their time; yea, likewise that

that publick backſliding, doth oft viſibly wear men out of perſonal tendernes.

FIFTH. Unſubduednesse of ſpirit, and want of mortification to outward things, the Word doth clearly threaten, and hold out its hazard, the accompliſhment whereof Chriſtians experience can witneſs, *Rom.* 8 : *ver.* 6, 7.

1. That God hath oft turned their idol to be their croſſe, put a mark of his jealouſy on their deareſt things, when once they put them in his room, yea, frequent obſervation of the Lords way both with themſelves, and others doth ſhew, if they would be quite of a thing, they may ſet their heart immoderatly on it, ſuch eagernes and exorbitancy of affection being a ſure preſage, it ſhall either be their judgement or ſorrow or ceaſe to be.

2. That outward things did never yeeld leſſe then whileſt they preſt them moſt, that when they are eager in purſuit of the World, and ſatisfaction there, their ſpirits are ſenſibly hurried with many perturbations, ſo that they muſt ſay, that which keepeth them from enjoying of God doth alſo hinder the conſortable enjoying of themſelves.

3. They have found that ſlow advance in the work of mortification, hath at laſt doubled their ſmart, and been the procuring cauſe of ſome very ſharp cure, when the diſeaſe did come to that height, that a ſmall and ordinary potion could not do the turn.

4. That immoderat deſire, and preſſing after an outward thing, they have ſometime got anſwered, but therewith a ſharp reproof from the Lord, yea, uſually have found ſmall ſatisfaction in their enjoying that, about which they were ſo unſober in their purſuit, give children, or elſe I dye, ſaid Rachel, ſhe

got children and she dyed, in bringing one of them forth.

5. Their experience can also witnes how overcaring anxiety hath oft caused things thrive worse under their hand, whilest they found never a more satisfying issue in a particular, then by a quiet, submissive dependence on the Lord for the same.

SIXTH. The doing violence to light, and sinning with a witnes against the conscience, as it is clearly threatned in the Word so likewayes the sad effects thereof hath been clearly witnessed, in all ages, *Prov*: 29. v. 1. *Psal*. 81. v. 11. 12.

1. What a direct tendency this hath to the further darkning of their light, and to a judicial hardning, and that reproofs not entertained do usually become lesse frequent, yea, lesse pungent, and searching; their heart then doth not so easily smite them, and put the tear in their eye, as sometimes a word, or secret rebuke of the conscience would have done, so as they can now digest greater things; who would sometimes have stood at that, which comparatively was very small.

2. That when they would not read their bosom distemper, which both by the word, and conscience was pointed out, others have got leave to read the same written on their forehead, and the shifting of discovered guilt, and of all serious endeavour to get the quarrel taken up in secret betwixt God, and them, hath brought the matter at last, to some publick hearing, even before the generation.

3. That their darkening of their light upon some privat intereſt, while they would again, and again enquire if such a thing be warrantable, concerning which the Lord had once cleared their minde, is a most

moſt perillous thing, yea hath got an anſwer according to the idol of their heart, and their choice made to be their judgement.

I ſhall but adde what bitter, and ſad experience can tell, how dreadful it is to give the conſcience a wramp which is more eaſily hurt then healed, that deliberat adventuring on the occaſion of a temptation, when they would goe to the high prieſts hall without warrant, or a calling, hath coſt them dear; and they have found that bold ſinning doth afterward make faint beleeving.

(¶) I know it is by the ſerious and experienced Chriſtians, and by theſe only, this argument in the meaning thereof can be reached, and it is ſure, ſuch will not debate the ſame, who know the truth, and have it dwelling in them, and on another ground then report are eſtabliſhed in its certaintie; for theſe can witneſs what ſweet comforting houres they have had with Jeſus Chriſt in a ſad uncomfortable time, that he hath both ſpoken, and himſelf alſo hath done it, and muſt therefore ſeale his word and the truth thereof, becauſe he hath ſealed it on their heart; yea, do ſo ſurely know, it is God who worketh all their works in them, that with their laſt words and dying breath, they have confidence to aſſert this, and commend that excellent ſtudie of godlineſs to others.

I know that with a great many of the World, this grave convincing argument of experience hath no weight, for ſtrangers intermedle not with that joy, and therefore fancie it a pure fiction, as the only expedient and preſervative to their heart, from the horrour and inexpreſſible torment, which muſt ſeaſe on them, if the certaintie and neceſſity of godlineſs

were granted, these scoff at this excellent thing, as some vain conceit or distemper; because they would have it so. But with such, I must here crave a serious and free communing, yea in so great and concerning a businesse must obtest they would not shut their eyes, but allow reason that weight, they would do in any other case; O what do yow alleadge, on what ground do you reject this great witnes of experience? If you deny it, because you have not found it, doe not others assert this, because they surely know it? And their assertion hath these two advantages, one, that they once had the same sentiment and opinion with you, which now they reflect onwith much horrour. 2. The realitie of its effects on them proves both the realitie of the cause, and the excellencie thereof; and now if these be indeed serious, and their testimonie true whom you thus challenge, are you not in a sad & dreadful case? since yow cannot think to lodge together at night, or that your interest and theirs will meet in another world, which hath been so verie opposite here by the way; yow must surely pairt with these at death, and land at some other porte, to whom all your life you have walked so cross: O sit but with your selves alone, and consider this, you hate serious Religion, and therefore you reproach it; will you take such a revenge on your selves, and out of prejudice to it, runne on so great and eternall a ruine? But know assuredly, it is not what you judged, and if once you pass in this delusion that great and last step betwixt time and eternity, you are undone, oh undone for ever! And sure if you admit the authority of this Scripture, you cannot debate the Christians experience, while there you have so great a cloude of witnesses, who bear that same testimonie, but it is on your selfe you must reflect,

not

not on the truth, that you know ſo little in this way.

Now to leave ſome conviction on the Atheiſts of this time, and theſe who take libertie to ſcoff at ſerious Religion, I would here offer ſome rational grounds, which even to the World and byſtanders may convincingly demonſtrat, if they would but conſider the ſame in earneſt, that this teſtimony the Saints doe in all ages bear, from their experience, to the truths, can be no cunning device or falshood, but is moſt certain and true; for.

1. That muſt be a ſure teſtimonie, and is no cheate, if you judge theſe who declare the ſame have the ſenſe a Deitie and have any truth, or morall candour, for it is a clear dilemma, either ſuch, whoſe witneſs this is, are impoſtours of the higheſt degree, yea in Atheiſme and groſs deceit muſt exceed all the world beſide, or, it is true and valide what they witneſs; now for the firſt, I ſhall crave no more in their behalfe, but an appeale to your conſcience and ſober thoughts, if you could judge thus.

2. This teſtimony muſt be ſure, if you but allow theſe the uſe of judgment and reaſon who bear it, and do not judge them wholly demented; for it were a ſtrange and unheard madneſs, that men would purſue a shadow, with ſo great ſeriouſneſs, and on this intereſt venture ſo farr, if Religion and the power thereof were not a reality; ſure one of theſe two muſt hold, if Chriſtians do not experience themſelves, what they hold out to others, that they are either in the higheſt meaſure profligat, and wicked, even beyond the ordinary rate and depravation of humane nature, or, they muſt be under a ſtrange madneſs, and *delirium*; they muſt either deſigne to cheat the World, or themſelves; but though their adver-

faries could wish to have it so; I think their malice will not make them so mad, as to own that challenge, and since these cannot be alledged, I profess were I the greatest Atheist who did not own the Scripture, I could not seriously consider the way and walk of such who are tender Christians without astonishment, or conceive how in such a world, and at so many visible disadvantages, they should be thus engaged, on any other consideration, then the truth and reality of Christianity.

3. Do you not see, this is their testimony, who are willing to be tried therein, and render a reason of that hope which is in them? yea, doe in this offer themselves to trial, and with greatest seriousness obtest the world, not to credite implicitly their witness, and take it on trust, but themselves put it to the most exact inquiry and search, and truely if there be an appeale and reference to mens sense and feeling, which can admit no debate, I know not what access they have to question this witness, until they first put it to an essay, that from their own experience, they could contradict the same.

4. Should you not admit this for a sure testimony, if you grant any moral certainty of a thing, that there is some case wherein a humane testimony can allow no debate, which in this present case must be undenyable; for you know by two witnesses a matter is judicially established: but is it not more confirming when they are of known judgment and integrity? yea out of diverse and remote places of the earth, and otherwayes strangers amongst themselves, but yet more, not onely when dying they owne and assert this, but are willing to dye upon a testimony thereto, and seale it with their blood, and this also through all ages renewed; O what can be

more

more convincing as to moral certainty? Now I do atteſt the world if this argument of Chriſtian experience have not as full and unanſwerable proofs of its certainty.

5. This witnes can be no counterfeit, and you muſt judge they are worthy of credite, to verify the Scripture from experience, on whoſe practice you ſee it ſo convincingly tranſcribed, should not the declaration of ſuch anent the truth of the promiſe, have much weight whilſt yow ſee what a ſeriouſe reſpect theſe have to the rule, to have their walk ordered in that way, where the Scripture warrands them to expect the fulfilling of the promiſe; And are not theſe ſeen to be the moſt tender ſeriouſe Chriſtians, whoſe way uſeth to have greateſt authority over your conſcience, who do moſt own this witneſs, and hath the largeſt account to give thereof.

6. Is not this their teſtimony alſo, whom on your exacteſt and narrow notice, you may ſee ſtudies Religion, in the ſecret and retired duties thereof? where ſome other intereſt then the obſervation of men muſt be an incitement; yea, may you not obſerve there are ſuch, who do ſeriouſly owne the practice of theſe duties when the view of theſe about them, might be a greater lett, and ground of fear, then any perſwading motive? and whilſt you chalenge the light profeſſion of many within the Church, do but alſo ask your conſcience if there be not ſuch, whoſe way you muſt juſtify, even over the belly of your hatred and prejudice againſt them, that it hath a convincing ſavour of humility? yea, their growth under the ground, and being ſeriouſe and real in what they profeſs may be clearly diſcerned from a naked and empty shew.

7. Can theſe intend by ſuch a teſtimony to deceive

others, who have oft been in so great fear and disquiet, that they be not themselves deceived? O how convincing may this be to the world to consider what perplexing queries, and doubts Christians have sometime about their own inward case, yea after such sharp wrestlings a most sweet calme and composure of spirit may be discerned; it is strange this puts not Atheists to a more serious inquiry, what such changes can mean, which will make men differ so farr from themselves, whilst no outward cause can be discerned; It is true some maters ly much under ground, the heart knows its own bitternes, and a stranger doth not intermedle with its joy, yea, the deepest plunge and exercise may make little noyse without, yet this is sure, there is so much under these vicissitudes, that is obvious even to the view of onlookers as may leave some conviction, their enjoyments must be true and real when the want thereof is so sensibly felt, & the world is not so stupidly inadvertent, not to observe this, if they did not shut their eyes for fear of such a discovery.

8. Should not their testimony be very convincing whose complaints and challenges you may finde more at home upon themselves, then against others, who are oft bemoaning over these evils which the eyes of man could not reach; may not the world see how some are prest with anguish of soul to the wasting of their body when no cause from without is known, and otherwise rational and most composed; yea, may it not sometimes be discerned there is more smothered within, which gets no vent, then appears without? for griefe in earnest wants not some peculiar marks, by which it may be witnessed to others, I think this should put the world to such a reflection, there must be some griefe and joy and a cause

cause for it, which goes above the world or the things thereof.

9. This is their testimony, whose confidence and composure of spirit in the greatest exigences may witness to others that perswasion they have of the truth within their souls; You see also at what labour and work these are in the duties of religion; yea, when they are most serious, how native and inconstrained their motions are; O doth not this show the grace of God, and a new nature is another thing then words, & that they must surely find satisfaction in these duties which makes it to them a special delight and pleasure, which you would reckon an intollerable and sore toyle.

10. Doe you not see how these agree every where and at every time anent this testimony, that the Scripture is verified by experience, and the breathings and influences of God on the soul trysts them in the way of duty according to the promise, even whilst they most remarkably differ amongst themselves in their natural temper and disposition; and is it not known whatever particular and lesser difference, through the prevalence of corruption, are too frequent amongst these, yet no challenge, no reflection on the truth in reality of godliness in it selfe will be found when their challenges are most bitter one upon another; I must further attest your conscience, whilst you have heard the sad regrate of dying Christians anent the interest of their soul and shortcoming in the study of godliness, have not these complaints been still to commend Religion, & the excellency thereof, and reflect only upon themselves; but none ever was heard to have such a complaint, that they did cheat the world in that matter, by obtruding upon them a falshood.

11. May you not see this testimony which Christians give to the way of godliness, that it is from these who acts deliberatly in that great interest, and have a rational account to give of the grounds on which they walk, and doe you not find they are men as well as Christians, that none are more friends to reason and the right exercise thereof, then such who are most seriouse in the study of Religion; It is sure could the world have their sight, and with Moses such a look of an invisible God, it would be easy for them to be of their judgment also.

12. That you are so ready to chalenge the Christians testimony, may you not finde the true cause within your selfe; not from your judgment, but a rooted prejudice and enmity at the way of the Lord, whereof yow can give no reason; yea have you not oft reproached Christians at a distance, whom upon a more near particular acquaintance, you have from some irresistible conviction left upon you, been forced to justifie? For godliness hath this singular advantage to silence all its adversaries that none will challenge or reproach the same, but these who never knew it, and should such a witness be admitted? O strange with what liberty men can deride this, who yet dare not goe alone to have some seriouse thoughts about it.

13. I know you will not deny there is such a thing as hypocrisie and a false shew of godliness, yet sure you have no ground of challenge, or to question the truth and power of this, which is so convincingly witnessed to, even by hypocrisy; for there should be no use for such a cover, no cause for that imposture, if there were not also a truth, and reality therein; you cannot conceive a counterfeit, but as it stands related to that which is true; if there were not

not such a thing as seriouse godlines, the world could never have known how to personat it; could there be a lie, if there were not a truth? You see also that it is the most seriouse discerning Christians, such usually doe fear, and have an awful regard of, for which there were no ground, if they were not conscious of the truth of that in others, whereof they only study the appearance, yea, here I must also appeale the world and ordinare onlookers, if there be not, even to them, some discernable difference betwixt the power of Religion, and an empty shew, (though this make greater noyse) betwixt these who are seriouse and tender in following the Lord, and others who glory in appearance, but not in heart; for the one by a convincing manifestation of the truth do's commend it selfe to mens conscience, hath a living air and breath, which by no art or cunning can be drawn to the life, no more then an exquisite painter with the choyseſt colours in drawing a man upon a brod can therewith draw the vitall acts of breathing and moving.

14. May you not see holines must be some excellent thing, which hath such credite, even with it's reall adversaries, and the worst of men, to make them grasp, at the appearance and shadow of that, which others know, they hate the power and practice thereof; And here I would ask the world, is it not to the Scripture and truth thereof, the experience of the Saints bears witnes, that they doe indeed feel and prove within their soul, what yow see written before you, in this blessed record, but is it not also sure that nothing is more directly cross and opposite to the Scripture, then a false appearance and shew of that, which is not reall?

15. Can yow debate, there are such Christians in

in the world, yea, many such whose experience do's witness the truth of religion, of whom it must be said (even their enemies being judges) their being serious in that way, and choyse thereof, must be for it self, and hath no outward designe or intereſt, to which it can be subservient, whilst in this oft they runne the greateſt hazard & are rendred a prey to others? O must it not be a marvelous thing, which hath that dominion over the souls, to teach men the practice of self-denyal, not onely to quite, but a chearful quiting their neareſt intereſt, to smile on the spoilers, to rejoyce in their suffering and reproaches, to forgive wrongs, and take revenge by good will; this is indeed above nature, and is only peculiar to Christianity, which can also turn poyson to an antidote and cure, and gaine by its greateſt losses.

16. You may see what different syzes are amongst the Saints, how great a difference also betwixt the experiences of one and another; some made to witness much bitterness in departing from God, and others that singular advantage in drawing neer to him, yea, how neer sometimes will great extreams in their condition, border with other; at a strait to expresse their joy, who not long before would have thought a vent to their grief a special ease; O must not this be a matter of earneſt, and when you see how much these amongst themselves doe thus differ, that yet all these differences meet together, and concurs in a most cleare testimonie to the Scripture, and truth of godliness; yea, how this wonderfull contrivance of the Scripture is suted to answer all this variety of changes in the Christians case, and passeth none over.

But oh, what can be said here, where weeping should be more fit then words, to see what contempt the

the great part of men puts on serious religion, which doth truly raise them above the condition of the beasts; is not the atheisme of the time at that height that we must say the assault of the adversarie is not so much at one single truth, as at the root and being of all religion? And truly we may fear some sharp and extraordinarie cure to recover this generation of a disease, that would seem in an ordinarie way incurable; I shall but further offer these few queries, and plead so far with the adversarie, that they would ere they pass them have but some serious thoughts thereon.

1. If there be a God, or a truth in any Religion, is it not with this blessed record of the Scripture you must close as the alone rule thereof? yea, if your judgment and conscience be not both extinct, must you not consent to the law and doctrine therein held forth, that it is good, what ever be your aversion therefrom? 2. Is not an immortal soul, and a being for ever such a venture as is of more value, and should be to you, that the whole world? 3. O can you be thus indetermined about so great an interest, you seem to be hesitant and unsure if there be an other world, a heaven, or a hell, but oh, are you sure these are not, and how then can you be secured from such a fear, which of all fears is the greatest? 4. What a horride and uncomfortable thing is it to be an Atheist, which gives men no hope beyond this present life? Yea, what a world would this be to dwell in, if there were no true godliness in it, since without this, nō comfortable humane society, no kindly and right subjection to the magistrat can be expected from these, who have no tye from above, and knows not what it is to pay homage to a sove-

raine

raigne being. 5. Is not the native tendency of Atheisme to all ungodlineſs in mens practice, yea, how farr doth it debaſe humane nature and levells it, even with the beaſts. 6. Whilſt you ſcoff at ſeriouſe Religion, I dare appeale your ſelves, if in your retirements, when you have any ſober reflections, you are not forc'd to have other thoughts; and why is it, you ſo much fear to goe alone, and be in any meaſure ſeriouſe with your ſoul; Oh what a deſperat ſecuritie is that?

I ſhall onely adde, is it not rare to finde a profeſſed Atheiſt at death, when once the approach of another world does awake the ſenſe of a Deitie? But then it is eaſie to ſee men, who have ſported at godlineſs in their life, weep over that wretched mirth, when it comes to death, and call for ſuch Miniſters, whom once they hated; and oh, what a dreadful cure will hell be of atheiſme, for there they know the truth in earneſt, though it be their terrour; it is alſo ſure the Divel is no atheiſt, who beleevs there is a God and trembles.

I muſt yet a litle further crave libertie ere I paſs this argument, to ſpeak a word, even to theſe, who know and have experienced the ſame; O how great should this be in our eyes, and with what aſtonishment may we conſider it? Which by ſo full, ſo ſatisfying a demonſtration doth witneſs, not to the eye, or eare, but to the ſoul, the certaintie of divine truth and the power and reality of godlineſs, should we not think, if but one, in an age, or that every particular Chriſtian, were but once at ſome ſolemne time of his life thus confirmed, that he could ſay, then did he taſte and ſee the word, and found it ſurely verified on his ſoul, aſſure as he kno weth that he li-

ves,

yes, at what a rate would he value and preserve so singular a seal and confirmation of the truth, yea, keep up the remembrance of such a special time whilst he lived? but oh, must it be said that this grave witness this clear demonstration of the Scripture, and of the certainty of the words of truth, which we have by experience doth lose its weight, and the inestimable value thereof less regarded, that it is the Christians dayly bread? O what a reach hath this argument; what great things are there held forth? I think a seriouse look of the same, if it were brought neer to us, might put us to question, whether we beleeve the same, or not; are we in a dreame or awake; and sees them with our eyes which this doth so convincingly demonstrat; whilst we can so easily pass them with so little weight thereof on our spirit; now to hold that forth, let us but bring neer this argument, and gravely consider the same with respect to some of these great truths, which by this unanswerable demonstration of experience are witnessed: I must say, such truths that we may wonder how men can so easily admit their being true, and in so ordinary a way look thereon, without wondering and astonishment.

1. Doth not this argument of experience by a verie clear demonstration witness that great truth of a Godhead, whereon the whole superstructure of truth and godliness doth stand? yea, in another maner do's enforce on men the perswasion of this by a more neer and convincing discovery, then the greatest works of God, or these glorious appearances of his power and wisdome in the heavens, and earth doe; it is true, these bring him neer to our eye and ear; but O this brings the blessed and invisible God neerer, into the heart and soul, that we may both taste

taſte and ſee, that ſurely he is, and is that which in the Scripture he is declared to be; it is not the contemplation of nature in its higheſt flight can anſwer ſuch an aſſault of the Devil, which may tryſt the moſt eſtabliſhed Chriſtian anent the being of God; but there is a demonſtration within which goes further then the judgment, and paſſeth natural underſtanding, whence we feel, we taſte, we enjoy, yea, his voice is heard in the ſoul which we ſurely know to be his, and this is the reach and import of this argument: There is indeed cauſe to wonder at the atheiſme of this world, ſince men can look no where, without ſome witneſs of a Deity to ſtare them in the face, but oh, there is a more refined atheiſme that lyes in the boſome of a profeſſed aſſent to divine truth, & is not eaſily diſcerned, though not the leſs dreadful that it goes under a cover not only from the view of others, but even from a mans ſelf; I would here offer ſome things which do witneſs a ſpecial advantage the godly man is at thereby to believe, and to be more throughly perſwaded of the glorious being of God. 1. That he finds the believing of this is a very great thing, and not ſo eaſy to reach as the world do ſuppoſe, for it is no ſmall matter even to attaine this; Oh, what ordinarie thoughts have many about it, who thinks it eaſie to paſs an aſſent to this marvelous truth, becauſe they never conſidered the greatnes thereof: but it is ſure, the more ſerious and grave a Chriſtian is, it will give him the more work, and we may find theſe uſuallie are more plunged and exerciſed about this, then others. 2. It is a great advantage, when this is ſo far mens ſerious ſtudie, as to be upon an inquirie after a further eſtablishment in ſo great a truth; O what another ſight of the inviſible God? What a ſatisfying perſwaſion

of

of his bleſſed being might we have, if our ſoul were indeed herein exerciſed; and knew but how little we know and have reached in this, that there is a neerer approach to God, which should shew us the faith of a Deity is ſomething beyond theſe former thoughts we have had thereof, we loſe many ſingular confirmations anent this, becauſe we doe not in earneſt look after them. 3. They are at a ſpeciall advantage to whom believing of this truth, (O bleſſed truth, that God is) is their exceeding joy, and amidſt their heavineſs can ſay, the thought and meditation of him is ſweet, that when through a variety of temptations they are readie to faint, this reſtoreth their ſoul, yea, will cauſe it leap within for joy, and is their *Enough* when other encouragements are furtheſt off, that *God lives*: O what a thing is it in ſuch a world, and in ſome deep perplexing plunge, to know the Lord is God, whom he hath now for a rock and a ſhield, and in the cloſe of time for his exceeding great reward; can we have ſome ſerious thoughts of this, and ſo eaſily turn our ſelves to other things without aſtonishment, yea, is it not ſtrange there should be oft ſo neer and immediat a bordering betwixt our thoughts of the glorious God and the meaneſt trifle: 4. It is no ſmall advantage where men can open the Bible and retire into it, under the ſenſe and impreſſion of a Godhead, and that neer correſpondence he hath this way with his people, on whoſe ſoul theſe words hath aw and authority, *Thus ſaith the Lord*, yea, have that repoſe upon his teſtimony and promiſe, which the ſolide perſwaſion of his being and faithfulneſs should cauſe. 5. They have come a great length here, who in their ordinary walk, are under ſome weight and impreſſion of this that God is neer, who knows of their ſitting down

and rising up, from whose sight they cannot shift one thought, yea, that on him they have such an absolute dependance, that without him they can not draw their breath; O where this is beleeved must it not cause both fear and wondering?

2. Is not this an argument which by a sure and unanswerable demonstration do's witness the truth and reality of grace, that there is such a thing, and is no empty sound, which doth raise man above the natural state of men, as far as reason puts him above the state of the beast, it is truly strange this should be believed, and yet is not more marvelous in our eyes, how we can be at such rest whilst one of these two lyes under debate, the reality of grace or our being really interessed therin; O is there not cause of astonishment that such a product of heaven should be found in the earth, whose descent and original is so clearly demonstrat by its breathing upwards after God, its native tendency and motion towards him, whence it came? Surely grace is a great subject to think on, and that it is not so in our eyes, it must be either we do not believe it, or do not consider what a change it makes on the soul, which is no transient dispositon, but the seed of God that remains, is not this such a thing as makes spring in the winter, causeth men grow under their greatest weights? that lifts the soul up from the clay, yea does by bringing it low in its own eyes, raise it neerer God, this makes a man to have another appearance, on which the world is forc't to look with some astonishment, one Christian doth admire this in another, & the more it shews it selfe, it causeth a more neer approach betwixt their souls; it will cause fear in them who hate it, and hath a power even over its persecutors; now it is the truth and reality of this excellent thing, that this argument do's witness

neſs; yea ſuch a witneſs that can admit no debate, where experience makes it ſure: I confeſs a ſerious look & perſwaſion of this might make the Chriſtians life a continued wonder, that there is ſuch a thing, which by a marvelous ſurpriſal did prevent him when he was not aware, hath entred him into a new world, & tranſlated him from a ſtate of darkneſs unto a marvelous light, cauſeth the ſoul breath in another air, brings him ſo neer that ſtate of the angels, ſubdues the will without violence, & ſubjects it with its own conſent; yea, by ſo ſtrait a ty is link't with an eternal glory in bleſſedneſs; Surely this is one of the moſt ſtately pieces of the work of God, that exceeds the whole ſtructure of the univerſe; O with what aſtoniſhment ſhould we look on this marvelous thing, if we could conſider the whole frame and ſtructure of the grace of God in a Chriſtian, and there make as it were a diſſection in its ſeveral parts and proportions, its decay and languiſhing, theſe different changes and ſiſes, its vigourous actings and abatements thereof, how it breaths, is nouriſhed, how it is keep'd green and preſerved by a continued intercourſe with the fountain of its being: & lo, whilſt we conſider this great wonder, both in the whole and in its parts, we may ſee how in theſe it do's moſt exactly anſwer that model we have thereof in the ſcripture of God.

3. This is a great argument, and ſhould be ſo in our eyes, which do's not only witneſs the reality of grace in its acting and exerciſe, which in this former ſection is ſpecially pointed at; but do's unanſwerably demonſtrat a *ſpiritual life* and being, which the Chriſtian knows and is perſwaded thereof, as he is ſure he breaths and hath a natural life: O what a marvelous demonſtration is this, wherein ſenſe and feeling doth in as certain a

way concurre, as in any diſcoverie we have by our outward ſenſes, that there is a new life and another being beſides that we have by nature, which anſwers to a new birth; yea, an other breathing and acting that is alſo ſuted thereto; but oh, can it be ſaid, we believe and know it is aſſuredly true, who have ſuch common and paſſing thoughts thereof, and do's not conſider what it is whereof we are ſure. 1. That this is ſo great a thing, it may indeed cauſe wonder to think we are men, and that we have a rational being, but O a ſpiritual life is another cauſe for wondering, which comes not by our birth, hath no natural cauſes, yet a life that hath its proper operation, and vital acts put forth, as truly as theſe natural actions of breathing and moving are put forth by a living man: O life that hath in as ſenſible a way quickening and refreshing influences, as the earth or bodies of men, knows the influences of the heavens; which hath a pleaſure and delight peculiar to its nature, that hath no affinitie with things we enjoy by the ſenſes, but is a pleaſure do's far exceed the ſame, and is this a ſmal matter to be perſwaded? 2. What a demonſtration is it which doth witneſs even to our ſence and feeling a power on the ſoul by the word, above the moſt perſwaſive words of man, and above all moral influences, by which men are not only reached, but tranſform'd into the ſame image, whence the Chriſtian know's, and know's aſſuredly, theſe great truths the ſealing, witneſſing, teaching, comforting of the Spirit, &c: are no matter of words, or ſome ſtrange deviſed names, but are undoubted realities acted and verified on the ſoul. 3. If this demonſtration of a ſpiritual life be ſure, have we not thus alſo, an eternal life and being with God put beyond debate? for, if

if we be certain of the one, O is not this undeniable that this noble being of the new creature, this life that is here begun, must have a more ful growth and be at the furtheſt ſtature of the man in Chriſt, when we now ſee it with our eyes in its infancie, and upon a growing advance towards the ſame, for the one is ſurely as demonſtrative of the other, as a young childe which we ſee in a growing tendencie towards a man, doth ſhew there is a man in his furtheſt growth. 4. If we aſſuredly know this Spirituall life, muſt we not alſo admit the undoubted truth of ſpirituall beings, and of an inviſible world, with which this life hath its correſpondence, yea thus as by a ſtreame be led up to the true fountain to know an inviſible God.

4. How great an *argument* is this, which gives us ſuch a demonſtration that heaven is not altogether deferred untill we be there, but that ſuch a thing is ſure, as the reall preſence of the glorious God, and a neer familiar approach of him to the ſoul, which is here as really felt and enjoyed, as we can be ſure of any thing; O how marvelous ſhould this be to us! I cannot doubt but the report hereof do's ſometime dazle the world with amazment, and puts the groſſeſt of men to ſtrange thoughts; But oh, may not this cauſe them queſtion its reality whether theſe who bears ſuch a witneſs, do truly feel and enjoy the ſame, who by their way and appearance do's ſo little declare any deep impreſſion, that this hath on them; I have ſometimes thought ſtrange how men are taken, even in a kinde of tranſport with the diſcoverie of ſome rare experiment and demonſtration in nature, which could make that poor man cry out εὕρηκα as though therewith he had gained the whole earth: but O here is another kinde of demonſtration, of a more tranſcendent value and intereſt! to know and be ſure

of this neer approach and intercourse betwixt God and the soul; that even with men in the earth he will verily dwell, and have so reall a converse; this do's indeed rise above Archimedes reach, and such who ever follow'd the search of nature in their most exact and subtile inquiry; O blessed souls who have found it! for they have found a treasure; the thoughts whereof may make it a new thing every day, and make them consider this with a renewed wondering, to know, there is not only a clame and tittle to the inheritance above, but that the first fruits and earnest thereof is got here; that as surely as there is a real and immediat converse betwixt men, they have found such a neer immediat fellowship with God, that all the words of the world cannot express; such a meeting betwixt him and them, where their soul hath been drawn out with desire, where they have found a breaking up of the day with an astonishing brightnes, after a most cloudy and dark night; O is not this a great thing! have they not cause both for joy and wondering who have fallen on such an experiment that they can say, and not from report, I do surely feel, I enjoy, I am perswaded this is the Lord, and thus have come forth from him with such a change on their soul, and composure of minde, that even by-standers might see where they have been: now this is the Christians witness, which all who are serious in the way of the Lord can in some measure bear, that in a way no less sure and demonstrative then any thing here beneath can be known, they have had such a discoverie, and now these strange Scripture truths, the meaning whereof once they could not know, such as, their soul melting within at the voice of their beloved, to have his name as ointment powred forth, and be brought neer to see his face with

with joy, they know well that they are as truly verified on the heart, as they are written before their eyes in the word; I shall but adde, it is a verie great thing these know, who know's assuredly the real presence of God here, for thus they are made sure that he is, as one may know the sun, because of its warming heat, and when they see it with its own light, thus they are confirmed of the truth of the Scripture, whilst they see and feel one of the most marvelous things therein verified.

5. This is an *argument* do's clearly witness a truth and reality in *prayer*, which may be called one of the great wonders of Religion, that such a way is, wherein there is so neer so immediat an address to the Majesty of God in all our concernments, is not this a very great thing that poor man, now upon the earth, hath such a passage to heaven, & may speak up unto him who inhabits eternity, the glorious object of the adoration of angels, without the interveening of any creature: yea, with so sure a warrand may approach the throne of God, & there poure out his soul, & present his requests unto him who lives and sees: O with what astonishment should we consider this! suppose at some solemne times in our life this only might be attain'd, yea, that it were but in one part of the earth should we not look on the whole earth besides as accursed, and reckon an abode there, were it a barren desert & wilderness, to be preferable to all other advantages: it may truly be a question whilst we are most in the practice of this duty, if we believe the truth & reality thereof; but it is beyond question what Christians have most sensibly found here, that they can say, if they be sure they have a soul, they have been as ure in this blessed way, they have had their soul resto-

red and return'd again, and under ſome *deliquium*, that by vvreſtling they have at laſt prevail'd, yea have got an anſvver from heaven, as if they had got it by an audible voice: novv is not this a great and marvelous demonſtration?

But oh what common thoughts have we thereof, and may not theſe things ſeem ſtrange, if ſeriouſly conſidered. 1. That we are not more reſtleſs to be ſurely perſwaded this is a truth when we are ſo highly concerned therein, that we may have further confirmations anent this, which we ſhould look on as an ineſtimable treaſure, both for our joy and eſtabliſhment. 2. It is ſtrange we can find it ſo eaſie a matter to pray and appear before God, that we are not afray'd to be haſtie in uttering a matter before him, whilſt we conſider God is in heaven, and we are but on the earth; it is ſure, if we intend the bringing of our ſoul with us in ſuch a duty, it ſhould be more our ſtudie to watch unto prayer throughout our walk. 3. It may ſeem ſtrange how eaſily we can ſtep out from the world, and the noiſe thereof, in before the Lord, vvithout the leaſt pauſe or time interveening, which the impreſſion of ſo great a buſſines ſhould require; yea, ſo immediatly in our return again ſtep into the world, as if we had vvholly forgot vvhere vve have been. 4. Hovv ſtrange is formality in ſuch a buſſines as prayer vvhich is an addreſs to the living God, one of the moſt ſolemne acts of the ſoul; yea, we may call it the moſt natural vvork of a Chriſtian, like the breathing of the child after the breaſts; Alace its ſad, that this ſeems rather a piece of invention many times, then a matter of earneſt vvith the Lord, not ſo much the breathing of the ſoul in deſire after him, as the expreſſing what ſhould be our deſires: O to what a claſs can ſuch a piece of A-

the iſm

theisme be reduced, as appears in our neereſt approaches to God? 5. Should we look on prayer as a dutie and not conſider it as a ſingular enjoyment alſo, without which this earth would have a neer appearance of hell, if we could not thus ſolace the ſoul in God, and get a vent under its greateſt preſſures: O prayer! What thoughts should vve have of it, if the truth thereof vvere more believed; I think that man vvho is ſure of the being & faithfulneſs of God, and of the reality of prayer needs not be ſolicitous with what face the World look on him; when thus his great intereſt and encouragement is ſecure, and a well is at his hand, that can anſwer all his complaints.

6. Have we not this demonſtration alſo by that *Argument* of experience, how neer the bleſſed Majeſtie of God do's in the way of providence approach to his people, and is ſurely known by a reall correſpondence he hath with them in this way, in which he do's ſo clearly verifie his word, holds forth light and counſel, gives the return of prayer, ſometimes vvith ſuch remarkable circumſtances, as cauſeth fear as vvell as joy and vvill force that teſtimony, *this is verily the Lord*; It is true, that in the ſmalleſt things he is great, and thus declares himſelf to be God; but there is a more ſolemne and neer approach, by ſome ſpecial ſteps of his providence: yea, by the rod he doth ſometimes ſpeak, as vvith an audible voice, and vvith ſuch a convoy of his povver opens the ear of men and ſeals their inſtruction, as vvill force its paſſage dovvn to the reins and in the hidden part cauſe them to underſtand vviſdome; there is ſometime alſo ſo vvonderfull a tract and ſeries of providences, and theſe ſo convincing that men cannot but ſee ſomething greater then man therein, vvhilſt things have been tryſted vvith ſuch a ſurpriſal, in the verie oppor-

tune time and seaſon that their *mercie*, though gre
in it ſelf, hath not ſo much taken them up as the wa
hovv it is brought about, and their diſcoverie o
the immediat hand of God therein, and the truth o
his vvord, and promiſe.

7. I muſt further adde, O! is not this a great Argument which perſwads the ſoul of theſe truths by ſo ſure a way as *experience*, that thus we have an inward and ſenſible demonſtration of the things of God, that are as certainly witneſſed, as theſe viſible Heavens & Earth are to our eyes, when they are moſt fixed thereon: O what is this which the Chriſtian know's yet know's ſo little what he hath thereby; this is indeed a ſight which puts the thing ſeen beyond queſtion or debates, for the ſoul hath its feeling and taſte as ſure as the body, & hath a ſavour and relish of things ſuitable to its own nature, whereby it can diſcern a peculiar ſweetnes and fragrancie in that which may ſeem bitter, and grievous to the flesh. It is by this ſight which experience gives, the Chriſtian is a witneſs himſelf, is therein perſonally concern'd, do's ſee theſe great things vvith his ovvne eyes and not with the eyes of others; the conſolations of God vvhich are not ſmall, are no matter of report to him; he know's hovv no mercie hath been more ſvveet and reliſhing as that vvhich hath had a bitter croſs going before; yea never more ſenſibly found his own burden, then he had found it taken off, the laying on whereof was not ſo grievous as that reliefe, and eaſe hath been ſweet upon its removal.

Now to shut up this *Argument*, I shall but adde the teſtimonie of two great and eminent witneſſes to the truth, who after they had been helped to ſerve their generation by the will of God, and were dying, had that large accompt to give from their experience

of

of the truth and faithfulnes of God in his word, and leave ſuch a ſeal to the ſame worthie to be tranſmitted to poſteritie; the one is that great Servant of Chriſt *Beza*, who in his younger years, after the Lord had touched his heart by the word, was one day in the Church of *Charenton*, tryſted with that 91. Pſalm, which then was expounded, and with ſuch power vvas followed, that not only he found it marvellouſly ſweet to him at preſent, but vvas then helped to believe, yea to a great perſvvaſion of the Lords making out all theſe promiſes to him in his perſvvaſion, vvhich as he after found verified did at his death vvith much comfort vvitneſs the ſame, that as he had been then helped to cloſe vvith that great truth in the ſecond Vers, in taking the Lord for his God, and got a ſure claime thereto, yea that he ſhould be his refuge and fortreſſe, he hade found him that moſt remarkably in the after changes of his life, that he had delivered him from the ſnare of the fowler, and the noyſome peſtilence, having been in frequent hazard by the lying in vvait of many to enſnare him, and ſomtimes was in great hazard from the peſtilence in theſe places where he was called to reſide; yea amidſt the civil wars which were then ſo hote in France, had moſt convincing deliverances from many imminent hazards, when he was called to be preſent ſometimes with the Proteſtant Princes upon the fields, where thouſands did fall about him; and thus whilſt near his death, he found that Pſalm ſo obſervably verified whereon he was cauſed to hope, that he went through all theſe promiſes, declaring the comfortable accomplishment thereof, and how he had found the Lords giving his Angels charge over him, had oft anſwered him when he had called on him, had been with him in trouble, delivered him; yea had

had satisfied him with a long life, and now sayes he I have no more to wait for but the fulfilling of that last word of the Psalme to shew him his salvation, for vvhich in confidence he longed. This though not vvrit by these vvho have given an accompt of his life in our language; yet I had the same from these most worthie of credit, who not only from some of the greatest French Protestants hade it when they were in France, as a known and sure passage, but told me they read the same there in a printed relation in that language, anent his life and death.

The 2. testimony I shall here offer is from a grave & eminent minister of Christ in our ovvn Church vvithin these fevv years, Mr *George Gillespie*, vvho near his death did declare to these vvho vvere by, what a large proof he had, and assured perswasion of the truth of the Scripture from experience; that he knew so well what adventuring on the vvord vvas, and vvhat it vvas to live on divine assistance, and be thus in all his concernments carried through, that he could not desire, vvere he to live in the vvorld, a more desireable and satisfying life, then that of a continued relyance and depending on the Lord; and trulie amongst many notable experiments that man of God hade thereof, this was one very convincing, how in a strange land, whither he was called on the service of the Church, and in a grave assembly of many of the greatest divins in that age, when one day he was surprised with an unexpected renconter of a learned Man Mr *Selden*, who came on designe with some others of that partie, upon the Erastian interest to debate for it, by the strongest arguments which they had then præmeditat for it defence; whilst none appeared in that greate assembly to give a return, though there were many singularly learned & able, he did on an immediat

immediat relyance on God adventure, (leſt the adverſary should take advantage thereat) and gave a short accompt of theſe arguments adduced, wherein the ſtrength of his diſcours did moſt ly, with ſo clear and ſatisfying an anſwer as aſtonished all, yea did ſilence the adverſary with a marvellous conviction; now this was the more convincing that having a little paper book in his hand, in which he was before obſerved to writ down ſomething, he was by ſome after preſſed to let them ſee his notes, ſuppoſing the heads of his following diſcours were in it, but found only in ſome Pages theſe words ſeveral times writt down, *Light O Lord, and aſſiſtance*, his ſoul being then carried upward for the ſame; thus did that bleſſed man give in his witnes to the truth when he was dying, from the ſure experience he had thereof, through his life; and with much aſſurance of the ſalvation of God died, which I muſt ſay is a remark, that in many inſtances might be obvious, how great peace and an abundant entrance, theſe have found in the cloſe of the day, who have been helped to moſt faithfulneſs in the publick intereſts of Chriſt, and his Church, and to the moſt ſevere adherence to their light, anent the duties of the time; which I knew in an other worthie Miniſter of Chriſt, not many years ſince, who by ſome of his laſt words did witneſs an unexpreſſible joy he found in this, that the Lord had keeped him in a time of many trials from giving his Ark a wrong touch, which he then declared to byſtanders, when he was on the very threſhold betwixt this, and an other World. (¶)

SECOND

SECOND ARGUMENT.

SECOND Argument to demonstrat the accomplishment of the Scripture is this, that not only Christian experience, but the observation of the Church and people of God, doth in all ages bear witnes thereto, how the Lords way in these providences both of mercy, and judgment, about the Church, amidst the various changes of her condition, yea, in the most strange things which fall out in the world, doth convincingly answer the word, and verify the same.

IT is indeed undenyable that the Scripture of God, as it is written to the personal case of his people, and doth in their experience take place, so is there a part of it in a peculiar way directed to the Church, the fulfilling whereof in the providences, and events of the time should be the subject of our observation, and would singularly help to confirm our faith of the truth thereof.

For prosecuting this argument I would touch it a litle in these three branches.

1. How these general promises which belong to the Church universal, and concern her in all ages, have an accomplishment.

2. How these threatnings also of the vvord vvhich doe not onely concern the Church, but have a respect to her adversaryes are certainly fulfilled, and take place in mens observation, vvho do observe the judgements of their time.

3. Hovv the Scripture of God doth clearly shine upon the darkest footsteps of providence, even these vvhich vvould seem most strange and hard to understand,

ſtand, ſo that it may be demonſtrat nothing falleth out in the vvorld, or befalleth the ſaints, but vvhat is moſt conſonant to the Scripture.

FIRST BRANCH. As to the firſt branch of this argument, I ſhall but inſtance five general promiſes, vvhich vve finde held forth in the vvord concerning the Church, and endeavour to shevv hovv very clear, and obvious the accomplishment of them is, if men do not vvillingly shut their ovvn eyes.

FIRST Promiſe vvherein vve find the Scripture expreſſe, is the *preſervation of the Church* that he vvil be vvith her to the end of the World, and though he make an end of other nations, yet, will he not make an utter end of her, but while the ordinances of the ſun, and the moon doe laſt, and as the dayes of heaven ſo ſhall her dayes be prolonged, againſt her the gates of hell ſhall not prevail. *Jer.* 30: *ver.* 11. *Math.* 16: 18. Now that God hath truely verifyed this his promiſe and is as good as his word, is a truth though marvellous, yet, ſo very clear, and manifeſt, that I am ſure no atheiſt can deny, it may be ſo eaſily demonſtrat.

Firſt, that the Church doth continue, and is kept alive to this day, it doth certainly prove the truth of his promiſe, for it can be ſaid of her, and none can ſay it is a lye, she hath outlived all her oppoſers, the greateſt of whom have found their grave in the quarrel, over whoſe tomb that laſt confeſſion of a great adverſary *Iulian* may be written *vicisti tandem Galilæe*, hath not this deadly, and irreconciliable feed been prepetuat from fathers to children, but who hath proſpered in that enterpriſe, the archers have oft shot, and wounded her ſore, but her bow doth abide in ſtrength

ſtrength, as at this day, this is her *motto*, *perſecuted but not forſaken*, *caſt down*, *but not diſcouraged*, she who hath brought many children, yet ceaſeth not to bear, whoſe age hath not marred her beauty, her eyes are not dim, nor her ſtrength failed, a ſight which may cauſe us no leſſe ſtand, and conſider this great wonder, then Moſes did at that which was but the shadow, and emblem thereof, a bush burning and not conſumed, for behold a Church kept alive, yet, ſtill in the flames, and when to appearance conſumed, it doth ariſe more glorious our of her own ashes, this is indeed the only *Phœnix*, and we know no other, of whom that can be ſaid, hath she not born out theſe univerſal deluges, which did like an inundation go over her head, of idolatry, and paganiſme in the firſt times, and Antichriſtianiſm with Arrianiſm in the after ages, yet not ſwallowed up, which may be no leſſe marvellous then when she was keept above the waters in the ark, and though her enemies have oft ſung her funeral ſong, and rejoyced over the dead bodyes of her witneſſes, yet, they have riſen again, her drie bones have taken life, and come together, and behold she is alive at this day.

2. Not onely the Churches preſervation, but the continued ſeries, and ſucceſſion thereof unto this time doth witnes the fulfilling of this promiſe, that in the darkeſt times, of her condition, she hath not altogether diſappeared, even, when she was ſo long hid in the wildernes, but ſtill in every age had ſome witneſſes, and though the Church hath oft cryed out for the want of Children, and been heard weeping, bemoaning her ſelf becauſe they were not, yet, we may ſay she never wanted an offſpring to this day, she did never dye without an heir, and ſeed of her own, to raiſe up her name, even ſince the Covenant

was

was first made with her in Adams family, and though particular Churches have their set times which like the sun have the usual periods, their height, and flowrishing, and afterwards a gradual decay, making way to the departure of light, yet, this made never void the promise of God to the Church universal, whole lamp was never put out, nay, shall not while the dayes of heaven doe last.

2. We must also say that the continuance, and preservation of the Church is peculiar to her alone, and can be said of no other intereſt and party beneath the sun, for it is clear that there was no Kingdome, or Empire so firmly rooted, no society so well governed by Lawes, backed with power, which hath had the best title, and claim, but time at last did prevail over it, and made the same a trophee of her conquest; yea, the greatest Monarchies, and flowrishing Cities have at last yeelded, so as of them it may be said, *nunc fuerunt est ubi Troia fuit*, but time cannot to this day boast of a triumph over the Church of God, though no nation, no family in the earth could ever plead antiquity with her: This is that intereſt, which hath born out all these great revolutions that so oft changed the very face of the world, yea, hath outlived so many Kingdomes, and successions thereof.

4. It doth convincingly demonstrat the truth of this promise of the Churches preservation, that the World, yea, greatest Atheistes may see, this hath not come to passe at an adventure, nay, not in an ordinary way of providence, but by a divine power, most discernable therein; while it is so clear. 1. That no intereſt, or party had ever such adversaries, as the Church, against whom the powers of World, and the powers of darknes have alwayes been on foot. 2. That outward advantages have usually been on her

adversaries side, not only the great men of the earth, but these of greatest parts,& abilities. 3. That their will was never wanting to their power & their designe no lesse then to raze her to the foundation. 4. That this enimity hath been rooted,&irreconciliable, which time to this day could never take up. 5. That no interest did ever endure such violent assaults, so many sharp batteries, for it is observable that most of the wars, and commotions of every age, have been some way stated on the Churches account, and what ever privat quarrels men have had among themselves, yet it hath not hindred the pursuit of their malice against the woman, and her seed. 6. That such who have come out of her bowels, even the men of her own house, have oft been her greatest enemies, and lyen in wait to take her at an advantage in the day of her halting. 7. That her real friends have oft fainted in a time of her strait, and stood afar off, yea, almost none of the Children, which she had brought forth have been then found to take her by the hand; 8. That the depths of Satan, in her enemies, as an angel of light have sometimes given her a sore assault, so that if it had been possible, and ordinary midses could have reacht their end, they should have deceived the very elect. 9. I must adde this further witnes to the marvellous preservation of the Church, which in an ordinary way could not come to passe, that we find no other party was ever brought so low and near death, to be yet alive, the knife was once at the Churches throat in *Isaak*, she did seek to adopt a bound-womans sonne in stead of a lawful heir, when *Abraham* agreed to *Sara's* overture for the outmaking of the promise; how near exspiring doe we finde her in Egypt, when a sentence to destroy all her male issue was gone forth? Yea, what but a miracle could have

have preſerved her, when she was betwixt Pharaoh, and the red ſea? How low was the Church in the wildernes, and after in the dayes of the captivity, even broken to pieces with ſmall appearance of life, when her face was all blurred with weeping, and her enemies made ſport over her ruines at the rivers of Babylon, when the Children of Edom cryed out let us raze her even to the foundation? Yea, could the Church be nearer the grave, then when her bones were ſcattered at the graves mouth, but above all in that dark night when her head and shepheard was ſmitten, and her hope ſeemed to be buried in the grave w.th a ſtone put upon it, when she could get no entertainment among the Jewes, was wounded in the houſe of her friends, and the Gentils in wrath roſe up againſt her, that for ſome hundred yeares the great Empire which had trod down all the nations about, put forth the outmoſt of power and malice for her undoing. O who could have thought the Church should outlive this? Yea, after all we finde her toſt, and hurried by Antichriſt into the wildernes, an adverſary more cruel then any that had gone before, where the Dragon watcht to get her deſtroyed, but how in all theſe, and through that long dark night she hath continued and marvellouſly flowrished, as the palm tree, under greateſt weights; ſo that we cannot but ſee that which her enemies being judges will not deny, that this promiſe to the Church of her preſervation is this day fulfilled, yea, that it hath not in an ordinary way been brought about; ſurely there is no inchantment againſt *Iacob*, nor divination againſt Iſrael, all her enemies have been found liars, happy art thou above other People, for the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are everlaſting armes, elſe long ſince she should have been ſwal-

lowed up; may we not ſtill ſay with aſtoniſhement, O what hath God wrought in her behalfe,

SECOND promiſe, which I ſhall here inſtance, that God had made to his Church in the Word, *Of her increaſe and enlargement*, that the Earth ſhould be covered with the knowledge of God, as the ſea of water, and her ſeed be as the ſtars of Heaven, that her bounds ſhould be from the ſea to the utmoſt rivers, which was promiſed to Chriſt in the behalfe of his Church and that she ſhould poſſeſſe the gates of her enemies. *Pſal.* 89: *v*, 25. *Pſal.* 2: *v.* 8: *Iſa.* 42: *v.* 4. *Iſa.* 54: *v.* 3.

As this promiſe is expreſſe in the Scripture, we muſt ſay it is no leſſe clear, and evident in its accomplishment, that ſurely the Lord hath keept his Word, whereto the event doth moſt exactly anſwer, and though yet it be not to the full made out, I am ſure there is ſo much at this day manifeſt, conſidering the former condition of the Church, as undenyably proveth the fulfilling of the *fo*rementioned promiſe which even to the conviction of greateſt Atheiſts may be demonſtrat from theſe grounds.

1. That vaſt extent which the Kingdome of Chriſt hath had in the World, for this cannot be denyed, that the greateſt Empire, or Monarchy could never ſo far extend their conqueſt, as the Church hath done, ſince the wall of partition was taken down; ſhort are the limits of the Grecian, and Roman Empire conſidered with this, whoſe bounds have been the ends and uttermoſt parts of the Earth, where neither Greece or Rome did ever ſet up their Trophees; hath not the Goſpel as the ſun made its circuit from the Eaſt to the Weſt? yea croſſed the ſeas, to the dark

dark northern nations, thus fulfilling its course, in order to its turn again, to the place of its first rising, that it may, as we are sure it shall once, visit the Jewes again, and the eastern places of the World that now are buried in a night of darknes, wich I think will be as sure a presage of the break of day, and second coming of the Lord, as the morning Star is to the World of the Suns accomplishing its course, and that it is returning again to the East where it should rise; hath not the Gospel now been through Asia where it did not tarry for a night, for many flowrishing Churches were there, and the going back of the tyde from thence was its flowing to another part of the World, which is indeed observable of the Church, as it is of the sea, that what it hath losed in one part, it hath gained in another; did the vast distance of Africk, its great barren deserts, or scorching heat hinder the Gospels making a visit thither, so as it was once a fertil soyle, and brought forth many famous lights, yea, something yet doth both there, and in the East parts of the World remain, to shew the Gospel was truely in these places; and hath Europe though last, been least on this account? Yea, what do mean the late discoveries of unknown parts of the Earth, but to make way for a more full performance of this promise, that the Gospel might stretch its conquest over the line, which surely was the gold and treasure Christ designd from thence that even America might have her day also, and the voice of the turtle be heard in these lands.

2. Not only the large extent of the Church as to its bounds doth witnes this, but also the great, and numerous offspring of Sons and Daughters which in these parts where the Gospel hath been were brought forth to Christ, for we may say, what Iohn saw in

viſion hath been very manifeſt to after ages, an innumerable company of all Tongues, Nations and Languages, of whom it could be ſaid theſe are born in Zion. O how great a harveſt of the Nations, is even already gathered? What a fleece hath every particular Church caſt? What a marvellous increaſe hath been in ſome places after ſpecial tydes of the Goſpel? May we not ſay that truth is now beyond debate, that out of one, and him not onely as good as dead, but truely dead there hath come forth as the ſand of the ſea and Stars of Heaven in number, the Church hath inherited Joſephs bleſſing of the womb, & the breaſts; in a fruitful offspring, the dew of Chriſts youth hath been as the womb of the morning. O what a marvellous and goodly company will this once be when gathered together? Then will the performance of theſe pretious promiſes be fully manifeſted.

3. This truth may be demonſtrat not onely from the reall conqueſt of the Goſpel, and theſe excellent trophees of her victory over many noted enemies, who have after been veſſels of honour, but alſo from the feigned ſubjection that ſo many have been made to render, is it not ſtrange, what a multitude doth in theſe times profeſſe the truth, and yet hate it, and were never drawn with the cords of love? How very many have courted the name of a Chriſtian, and wooed the ſhadow of religion, who never knew the truth thereof, which certainly is a convincing evidence of the Goſpels conqueſt that ſo many knees ſhould bow to the name of Jeſus, whoſe hearts were never bowed, or really ſubdued to him.

4. It is an unanſwerable proof of this truth that we ſee the Churches increaſe, and enlargement hath come to paſſe moſt punctually after that manner, yea, with all the circumſtances as was foretold and promiſed, ſo that

that the event doth in every thing answer the word, for, First it is there held out, that from a day of small things which men would be ready to dispise, it should grow up as a tender plant, and spread forth its branches over the nations, that the children of the desolat should be moe then of the married Wife, and the glory of the second Temple, exceed that of the first,& O! hath it not accordingly come to passe? 2. This great increase, and enlargement of the church was to fall out in the dayes of the new Testament, when Christ should be lifted up, that then he should draw all men after him; for these promises we have thereof in the old testament, doe clearly point at the times of the Gospel, and doth not the event here accordingly answer? 3. The Scripture holdeth out that the falling away of the Jewes should be the riches of the Gentils, and that their rejection should make way for the fulfilling of this promise even the ingathering of of the nations, and doe not men see the event with this very circumstance?

4. We finde the isles, and outmost parts of the earth are given to Christ for his inheritance, and foretold as a special part of the Churches increase, and do we not clearly see there is no place of the world, where Christ's Kingdome is more visible, where moe children have been begot to him by the gospel, we may say, then in these northern places, even in these isles of Britain, and Ireland, which are almost the uttermost parts of the earth, there being but litle from that airth, and nearer the pole which is inhabited, yea we may judge hath been that *Thule* whereof the Ancients did so much speak. 5. Was it not also foretold that the Church should possesse the gates of her enemies, at whose great increase the world should wonder; the princes thereof see, and be

troubled while God is known in her palaces for a refuge, and doth not the event witnes this, that over all the counsels, and essayes which the world hath had to hinder the churches grouth, her rising hath alwayes been upon the ruines of her greatest enemies, yea, these who have been a terrour in the land of the living did oft fall, & break themselves in that attempt, can men deny the marvellous progresse of the Church how from a small beginning she at last possessed the gates of both the east, and western Empire her old enemies, & do we not this day see her conquest advancing on the ruines of Antichrist, her last, & greatest adversary

5. As the fulfilling of this promise anent the churches increase is undenyable, since men cannot contradict their sense therein, we must also say this is a thing great, and marvellous, which no lesse then some divine, and extraordinary power could bring about, if we consider these things; first, that quick dispatch which the churches grouth, under the dayes of the new Testament hath made. O might not the pagan world wonder how in the space of two or three hundred years it was almost become wholly Christian; O strange! a *Diocletian*, & *Maximus* so grievously persecuting, and trampling on the very name of Christianity, & yet near that same age, this great Roman Empire, and Emperour submitting to the Gospel which was fulfilled in the dayes of Constantine.

2. How astonishing was it for the Churches rise, and increase to be brought about upon the ruine, and downfal of the idols of the nations, who had their temples, and were worshipped as God, that the world should be made to renounce its Bible, and that religion which for so many ages was deeply rooted by tradition from their fathers; these altars which were had in such reverence, demolished, and their tem-

temples made a ruinous heap, yea, tht very name of their Gods should be thus obliterat, was not this indeed very wonderful? but Dagon hath no ſtrength to ſtand before the ark of the God of Iſrael. 3. That it should be thus advanced by ſuch a mean as the preaching of the word, even of that which to the Iewes was a ſtumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishnes, how this voice should put to prepetual ſilence theſe Oracles that for ſo many ages had given a reſponſe to the world might be indeed aſtonishing, yea, that the Churches increaſe should thus be brought about, at no leſſe rate, then the overturning of greateſt Kingdomes, the converſion of ſo many nations, should tame, and civilize the moſt ſavage, and barbarous, cauſe the lion to ly doun with the lamb, and even make ſo great and univerſal a change in the face of the univerſe. 4. Doth it not ſpeak forth ſome divine power the carrying on of the Churches growth, and increaſe not only over the violence of men, but over all theſe dreadful errours, and inventions, theſe thick miſts which both in former, and late times, have aſcended out of the pit to choke her, that we may ſay, the Church hath not only been helped to tread upon the lion, & dragon, but on the adder, & cockatrice alſo, & doth carry the trophees of her conqueſt over all theſe at this day. 5. I would adde, is it not marvellous how the Churches increaſe hath been advanced in a way moſt contrare to all the rules of ordinary policy, by which States, and Empires have riſen, not by diſſimulation, but greateſt plainneſs, and free dealing for Chriſt, and his Miniſters did never flatter the world to embrace the truth; not by open violence, but a more excellent ſpirit, and power before which men could not ſtand, where foolishnes was made to confound, and outwit humane wiſdome, and weak-

nes to overcome ſtrength, that vve may ſay, O how litle of man and much of God was to be ſeen therein.

THIRD *Promiſe* which the Lord hath given to his Church in the word, is *the giving of the Spirit and powring out of the ſame*, which is there expreſly held forth, and promiſed, *Zach.* 12: 10. *Joh.* 14: 17. *Iſa* 59:21. And doth concern all times of the Church, though in a more full meaſure, to be let out in the dayes of the Goſpel.

It is true the Chriſtians inward experience can beſt witnes this, for theſe have an argument from within; they know, and they are ſure they have received the Spirit by the word, whereby they underſtand theſe things which are ſpiritually diſcerned, but that which here is intended, it is to ſhew, that the Spirit is truely let forth to the Church according to the promiſe, that it doth accompany the truth, and doctrine of Chriſt, and purity of the ordinances, as a thing which from clear undenyable evidences may be demonſtrat to the conviction of the greateſt Atheiſt: for I muſt think even byſtanders, ſuch who never knew any ſaving work of the Spirit, but live in theſe parts where the ordinances are diſpenſed with purity, and power, if they ſhut not their eyes, may oft clearly ſee ſomething going forth with the word, that is beyond words, a divine Spirit, and power which ſendeth forth its ſavour in the dayly adminiſtration of the Goſpel, yea, by its effects, and ſome convincing diſcovery thereof, doth force this truth in upon mens conſciences, who are otherwayes ſtrangers thereto.

Now to hold forth the accomplishment of ſo great a promiſe that God is faithful, and true therein, I would give in theſe clear, and convinceing witneſſes o the ſame. 1. Theſe

1. These excellent gifts, and enduments given to the Church, are they not a visible proof of this truth? For it is undenyable, where once the Gospel cometh that instruments are raised with another spirit, reapers sent forth, while there is a harvest to be gathered, and shaped for their work, yea, these who were of mean, and ordinary parts when called forth to the service of the Church, will have another lustre, that it may be oft seen with astonishment, how far not only they exceed themselves but these who were of more eminent natural enduments, I would but seriously ask men who never laid this truth to heart whence is that variety of Gifts, so suitably dispensed to the various employments, and different pieces of service, the Church doth call for? How are they thus suted to the several times, yea, to the very genius, and temper of such a time? Whence is it, that every gift, and qualification is so fitted and disposed for its proper use, some most peculiarly shaped out to awake, and threaten, these *Boanerges*, while others are set forth with a spirit eminently fitted to comfort; some mighty in perswasion, yet not so fit to expound; others most dexterous to instruct, yet, not so powerful to apply; some the gift of tongues, and others the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season to the weary; to some the face of a lion is given, when a heroick spirit of courage, and resolution is called for, to others the face of a calf for patient enduring in suffering times, surely it were a choice meditation to think how with as great wonder, we may say of this excellent body of the Church, as of the natural body of man, how curious, yea, marvellously is it framed, where every part doth answer another, and to the use of the whole, each hath its peculiar excellency, and something proper to every ones

ones gift may be then seen, as well as in the face of man, by which in somethings they differ from all other.

2. These more eminent extraordinary outlettings of the Spirit do also witnes this truth, which at some special times when the Churches necessity requireth it hath been most discernable, when the Lord sendeth forth his servants about a more then ordinary piece of work, either to doe, or suffer; when he is to plant the Church in some place, where the Gospel will meet with much opposition, is it not then manifest how some more then ordinary power, and irresistible efficacy doth accompany the truth, before which there is no standing, the disputer is then in his reasoning confounded by something above reason, the untoward, and rude are forced to stoop before the word and to confesse they have to doe with power, and not with words; yea, these whom the Lord maketh use of, who were feeble and weak as others, in that day are made as a brazen wall, and defenced city.

3. Is it not also undenyable that now under the New Testament there are Ministers of the Spirit, and not of a dead letter and empty sound? That with the word, there goe along a ministration of power, and life, whence a Majesty, and authority attending the publik ordinances is oft so discernable, that even these who know not what the Spirit is are made to see something therein which doth dazle them with astonishment; whence is it that at sometimes such a beauty, and power shineth forth with ordinances like a glance of the glory of God, even going before mens eyes, which for the present hath made a wonderful change upon some very grosse men and put them in an other temper, yea, forced them with fear

fear to acknowledge that surely God is near in the assemblies of his people; and I would ask whence is it, the word giveth law to mens consciences? should speak with such an authority, as maketh them all to shiver, that even the worst of men are sometime made to stand before the ministry of the word, like men standing at the barr upon life, and death, before a judge whose authority they durst not decline.

4. It is very discernable what a great difference & an other appearance, there is both on Ministers, and Christians at one time, from what they are at an other, in the discharge of duty, as if these were not the same persons; which appeareth not onely in the enlargement, and straitning of their gift, but also in povver and life; is it not seen, whith vvhat liberty these doe sometimes pray, are as a ship with a full gale before the wind? that it is then easy to preach, vvhen at other times there is like a shut door, that even onlookers may perceive a sensible languishing & them hampered in their very expressions, yea, as men rovving against a contrary wind, the word vvanting that savour and rellish it hath had at other times, & this not through a natural indisposition, or vvant of preparation, but that which all who ever served God in the spirit must confesse, hath most sensibly trysted them when they have thought themselves at the greatest advantage, for going about duety: O vvho can deny this evidence of the spirit, a thing in all ages so sensibly felt, yea, even obvious to the worst of men.

5. It is also clear that where ever the Lord hath had a Church at some special turnes of her condition there have usually been some more solemn times of the spirit and high spring tydes of the gospel, there was indeed a marvellous flowing forth of the spirit of God after

after Christs ascension, which like a mighty current did carry all before it, at which time more successe did follow one sermon, then hath been by the ministry of many others in an age; this made the world wonder, as if some universal enchantment had fallen on men; what that could be, which the more they sought to bear down, the more it increased, that made the rich choose poverty, and these who dwelt in palaces, take themselves with chearfulnes to the dens and caves of the earth; but besides this, it is very manifest that in a large measure the Spirit hath been let forth to the Church in after ages, yea, there is no particular Church where the light hath shined but hath had it's special times, some solemn day of the pouring out of the spirit, before the sun went down; which may be observed either at the first breaking up of the Gospel, or at some other remarkable time, & change of her condition; whence a great tack of souls to Christ hath followed, besides the reaching of the conscience, and stirring the affection of many others under a common work of the spirit, which usually goeth along with solemn times.

6. The going back of the tide, and visible withdrawing of the Spirit from particular churches, where it hath sometime, in a large measure, been let forth, is a very convincing witnes to the truth of this promise; for it is clearly seen at what a stand the Gospel is in these places where it most eminently shined; that the land which blossomed and was like a watered garden, hath been made as the heath in the wildernes, and then that the ministers of Christ, whose lot hath fallen in such a time are put to very sore work, to worke, as it were, with oares for want of winde, to cast out the net all night, and catch nothing; a shut doore is upon them in the exercise of their Ministry, duty

duty is made burdenſome becauſe the Lord is againſt them, there is an evident reſtraint upon the word, and its intercourſe is more with the ear, then with the conſciences of men, yea, any liberty they find is to execut a commiſſion of judgement, and to denounce the wo of the Goſpel. O, doth not ſo manifeſt withdrawing of the Spirit witnes the outletting thereof, and that it is a certain and real thing.

7. Doe not the ſtirrings, and ſtrange convictions which even the worſt of men have ſometimes under the word, witnes a divine Spirit, and power going along therewith, that which forceth an aſſent from their conſcience to the truth, which otherwayes they hate, yea, maketh them for the time, wonder they ſhould not have been more ſerious in the wayes of God, yea it doth often put a thorn in the bed of their ſecurity; for indeed the word, and the light thereof doth torment theſe who dwell in the earth: And truely this is a marvellous thing, which wineth in upon mens ſecret deſignes, and counſels, doth reveal to them the moſt cloſs thoughts of their heart, which they are ſure mens eye could not reach, taketh them down through themſelves, and yet, that the world knoweth not whence it is, yea, are they not forced to confeſſe, what a great difference they find betwixt the word from the mouth of ſome, who are holy, and ſerious though held out in greateſt ſimplicity, then from others even of greater gifts, and accompanied with more ſhew of eloquence, that ſurely the one hath an other ſound, and relish, ſpeaketh more feelingly home to their heart, then the moſt polished diſcourſe of greateſt oratours.

8. One witnes moe I ſhall here give to the truth of this promiſe, even theſe eminent examples of the great

grace of God, which in every age have shined in the firmament of the Church, some in love, and zeal, some in patience, and humility, some in the strong acts of faith, and self-denyal; which doe certainly demonstrat a more excellent spirit then that which is in the world, whence they appear with another lustre in their walk, and carriage, and have a sweet, and fragrant savour of the spirit to the very discerning of bystanders, which truely sheweth that his wind doth blow on his garden, when the spices send forth so pleasant a sent.

FOVRTH. We find an expresse Promise in the word of Deliverance to the Church in a low, and oppressed condition, that surely the Lord will plead her cause, will deliver his People when he seeth their strength is gone, and save them from the hands of their enemies. *Ps.* 18:47, 48, 50. *Ps.* 22:4, 5. *Is.* 54:17. *Is.* 51:23.

It is true, this promise hath its bounds, limits, and provisions which should be taken along in the application thereof, we know the Covenant of God with particular Churches is conditional only, he promiseth that he will be with them while they are with him, yea, it is oft seen, (and there is no jar here with this promise) that a People professing the Gospel, confederat with God, following duty, have even turned their back before the enemy, and in the holy providence of God, have for a time been given up to their fierce rage and violence; but it is also sure that this promise hath an accomplishment, and in the day of the Churches strait the Lord hath oft appeared, by a strong outstretched hand for her help, his own arm brought salvation to his

his People, when they ſought to him: for God is known in her palaces for a refuge, yea, ſurely the Church might oft ſing that ſong on ſuch clear grounds as though with Iſrael she had been ſtanding at the red ſea, *thy right hand, O Lord, is full of power, thy right hand hath dashed in pieces thy enemies*; for what nation, or People is like this to whom he hath shewed ſuch marvellous things.

Now to shew forth the faithfulnes of God in this promiſe, I would offer ſome few things that are a moſt clear and undenyable witnes thereto.

1. There are few ages, but wee have ſome record of the churches condition, which hold forth ſuch ſignal convincing providences of God, in behalf of his oppreſſed church and people, as may be a manifeſt ſeal to this truth; it is true ſome times have been more remarkable for ſuffering, times of judgement & of a growing trial wherein this truth hath not ſo clearly shined forth, yea that long night which the church had under Antichriſt, might ſeem to call it in queſtion; but nevertheleſſe, if men take a ſerious look of the Lords way, and ſeries of providence in ages paſt, comparing one time with another, what the ſtraits, and moſt extream caſe of the church hath at laſt reſolved in, they will find cauſe to cry with aſtoniſhment, *great deliverances giveth he to his people*, yea, the Lord hath done great things for them. I am ſure, were there a full record with that true account which might be given, of theſe more remarkable delivrances, that particular churches have met with, ſince the firſt planting of the Goſpel among them, wherein Gods very immediat hand for their help hath been diſcernable, it should *non-plus* the World, and greateſt Atheiſts anent the real outmaking of this promiſe.

2. The confeſſion even of the Churches enemies hath oft witneſſed this truth, that in purſuing their malice to trouble and undoe her, they have but undone themſelves; how tormenting diſappointments have cauſed their very flesh to pine away, and the cloſe and iſſue of their rage forced this conviction from them at laſt, that the Church is a burdenſome ſtone, to be lifted up, a party with whom it is full of hazard to meddle; have not ſuch been made to diſcern ſomething of a divine hand, ſo clearly againſt them, blaſting their counſels, and moſt promiſing attempts, as if their eyes with Balaam had been opened to ſee the Angel in their way, yea in all ages it is known how the conſcience even of the worſt hath oft bewrayed ſomething of a preſaging fear they have had of theſe whom they purſued with greateſt malice, and a dreadful impreſſion they had of a praying people, and their prayers.

3. This truth hath had the cleareſt witnes in times of the Churches greateſt ſtrait, and extremity, when difficulties have appeared inſuperable and an outgate in an ordinary way of providence moſt hopeleſſe, when viſible meanes have been withdrawn, all refuge failed, and none to help, that in ſuch a day the Lord hath been ſeen upon the mount and unexpectedly by very ſtrange midſes brought deliverance to a broken, almoſt ruined Church, even as it were betwixt the bridge, and the water; ſo that who would have a clear view of the accomplishment of this promiſe, may but turn back on theſe more remarkable extream exigences of the Churches condition, and there have it, how of a ſweet ſunshine hath followed the moſt dark, and cloudy times, a raging ſtorm hath reſolved into a refreshing calm, yea, that with a further growth of the Churches trial, and doubling of her

her burden, her enlargement, and outgate hath broken up with these great and obvious remarkes therein that it was a convincing return of prayer, & wrestling, with a further addition of some new and singular mercy therewith, yea, some eminent act of judgment upon her adversaries.

4. The greatest advantage, and victories which men have got over the Churches, and people of God can also bear witnes to this, that when the wicked have sprung up like the grasse, and the workers of iniquity seemed to flowrish, this very way hath the Lord taken to bring about a more full deliverance: Yea, on the other hand, hath it not been very obvious how the Churches gain hath been brought forth out of greatest lose, that these wounds which seemed most deadly, by the infinitly wise providence of God, have turned to her most effectual, and through cure; and mens unreasonable violence, & rage against the Church hath oft had an evident tendency to bring about even that whereto it seemed most directly contrary, some further mercy, and deliverance, then could have been expected; as the Amorites refusing Israel but passage through their land did prove the very mean to give them more then they sought, the possession of that land for an inheritance.

5. This witnes the observation of the Church in all ages can bear to this promise, that deliverance hath oft sprung up, and been brought to her hand from an airth, and by such meanes, as none would have expected, by such, as none but God could doe; a sudden report and rumour; 1 *Sam.* 23. *vtr.* 27. meanes that have been not only small, and improbable but that looked directly contrary, as in bringing the Church out of Egypt, yea, sometime by the wickeds being ensnared in the work of their own hands, is it

not obvious, how the Lord hath tryſted mens privat intereſts to put them on, for befriending his Church? and hath cauſed the earth to help the woman and raiſed up one oppreſſour to punish another, yea, often hath prepared carpenters, whence it was leaſt thought, to cut the horns of theſe who had ſcattered his people.

6. There is this convincing witnes to the truth of ſuch a promiſe, that ſudden remarkable change, which may be oft diſcerned both on mens inward frame, and the outward face of the Church, when a time of mercy, and enlargement is come; inſtruments raiſed of the Lord with a diſcernable elevation of their ſpirits to act, and doe exploits, the feeble then made ſtrong, and theſe who ſometime would have fainted at an ordinary piece of ſervice dare with ſuch a gale of divine aſſiſtance run, as it were, through a troup, and overleap a wall; for indeed this may in all ages be obvious, how eaſy it is to move, in the day when the Lord moveth for his people, and ſtrengthneth the girdle of their loines, that it was not their bow, or ſword, which got them the victory, but the very finger of God, ſomething above the counſels of men, or ordinary meanes, which hath ſometimes been made clear as the noonday, ſo that even, at ſome diſtance, theſe who are wiſe to diſcern the times, did ſee when there was a breaking up of a day of a Churches hope, how a previous motion, and ſtir amongſt the dry bones, the Lord as in the top of the mulberry trees hath been then diſcernable, & ſome promiſing appearance from the preſent diſpoſition, and temper of the Godly in that time (though we muſt grant mercy & ſoveraign grace, hath oft tryſted the Church when little of this hath appeared) which, like the breaking up of that cloud in the top of mount Carmel to the Prophet, though at firſt but

as an

as an handbreath hath shewed that deliverance to the Church was not far of.

7. I would adde this witness also; these convincing providences which in all ages have been shewed against the enemies of the Church, such as men could not passe without some remark, what an issue these have had, who have sometimes been a sore rod on the People of God, yea, a terrour in the land of the living? How they have become a most abject and contemptible party, like bees who have lost their sting; their countenance hath been changed, and they ceased to be any more a fear, when once their work was done, and the date of their commission for the humbling, and trying of the Church exspired; yea a judicial stroke from the Lord, hath been often seen upon their very judgement, and resolutions, which could not then serve them to trouble, and afflict the Church, the day being turned, and the time of her deliverance come.

FIFTH. There is this *Promise* also wich concerneth the Church in general, as well as Christians in their personal case, *that all things work together for the good of these who love God*, *Rom.* 8. 28. the accomplishement whereof as it is written out in providence to the observation of men, I would here touch.

This is indeed a great comprehensive promise, which in the constant course, and tenor of providence about the Church we may see, it doth take place; how these turnings, and changes of the World, the most strange emergents of the time, the various motions, and interests of men, doe cooperat together, and have an undoubted tendency to bring forth the Churches good as though they did intentionally act for the same, there wil indeed, one day, be a more

clear, and marvellous discovery of this, when the Lord hath perfected his work, and the mystery of God is finished, the Church brought safe to the harbour, then shall it be fully manifest, to what end all these stormes, and crosse winds in the counsels, and designes of men were, these things which in the time could not be understood, but seemed perplexed and strange, did really worke for the Churches good, for then men will see with their eyes a full performance of the word; yet we must say, even here, in every age, amidst the various changes of the Churches case, this hath so clear an outmaking, that there is no serious observer of providence, but may bear witness to it.

1. That not only the Churches good, but even her greatest good, hath most clearly had its rise, and been brought forth out of the greatest mischiefs, and hurts intended against her; that if we search the Scripture, and will turn over these after records of the Churches condition, we shall there find the most remarkable attempts, and plots such as Pharaohs last essay to destroy the Isralites, Hamans great design to root out the seed of the Jewes, that great Masterplot Sathan once had on foot, to crush the Gospel, and the Christian Church by crucifying her head, yea, in these last times Antichrists killing the witnesses have all, as if really intended by the instruments as well as the first mover, brought forth the Churches greatest good; so as the after mercy, and outgate hath carried some visible proportion to her trial, and to the greatnes of her adversaryes design.

2. It may be also clear, if we but trace back these memorable changes, wich have been up and down the earth, how direct a tendency they have had to this

this end; did not the bringing down that great image of the Monarchies witness this? We finde Nebuchadnezar raised up as a rod to the Church, and Cyrus for a deliverer; we may see the Persian, and Grecian Monarchies brought down, to make way for the setting up of the Messias his Kingdome. Antiochus must stand up a little for a sharp trial, and his downfal give the Church a new breathing, and hold forth to after ages a remarkable monument of the judgement of God against his enemies. Peaceable Augustus must tryst with his time in whose dayes shall be aboundance of peace; we finde a Titus set up to execute the judgement of God on the Jewes, to make way for a further enlargement to the gentil Church, a Nero, and Domitian to help forward the Churches suffering, and a Constantine to give her some rest, after so long, and sore an assault, and at last, the Roman empire mouldred down for Antichrists upsetting, to accomplish what did remain of the sufferings of Christ, in his Church by that adversary.

3. We may oft see a very strange tryst, and concurrence of things, how instruments act to bring about the Lords end and advance his Churches interest, even while each one doth most vigorously drive their own proper end, and design, which sheweth there is surely a living spirit in the wheels, that ordereth these motions, a supream and first mover that can thus determine them, whither they will, or not, to serve his end and the Churches good, when they most directly intend the contrary.

4. We have seen how in mens plotting the ruine of the Church there is oft an unseen hand determining their judgement, and inclination to fall upon that very way, then which we would think nothing could have

been more direct for her good and their own ruine, how an Hushai hath been sent in or some have been stirred up amongst themselves (upon their own interest) to break the pernicious counsels, and designs of others.

5. We have also seen the personal quarrels of the Churches enemies among themselves, brought to such an height, and to tryst so seasonably, that onlookers might clearly perceive that it hath been from the Lord, a judgement for their rage and violence against his poor oppressed People.

6. We have seen the Churches enemies raised to a strange height, all advantages favouring them, until their plot and mine hath been ripe for springing, and lo, at that very choke, something unexpected hath fallen out which did turn their former successe to their further ruine, yea, disappoint all; this the World is ready to call some fatal, and malevolent conjunction, which cannot be resisted, and what is this in effect, but the witness of mens conscience to a divine hand?

7. Have we not seen some sore dash, and overthrow of the Church bring forth her good, and a more full victory, how visible help and meanes have been taken out of the way, that something above meanes might be seen in her condition, even in that day, when all hath been given for lost, yea, truths loseing the day upon the field, bring forth her triumph on the scaffold, and at the stake.

8. We have seen most despicable, and ordinary things, made subservient for some great piece of the Lords work, a very small thing made the first rise of strange revolutions, that remarkable changes have been oft lying in the bosome of a common providence; yea, truely we finde both Scripture, and the

the observation of after ages witneſs that the Churches deliverance, and outgate did almoſt never come that way, by ſuch a method, and meanes, as she had moſt expected the ſame, and that Gods time of working may be oft very contrary to our time of expecting.

I shall only adde, is it not oft ſeen (which I am ſure all ages can witneſs,) how mens endeavours to darken the truth by errour hath been an effectual meanes for its further clearing? That the growing of a trial, a violent, and ſore exacting upon the Church, hath kindly wrought towards her outgate, and enlargement, her meat hath been oft brought even out of the eater, by midſes moſt deſtructive thereto, and a ſword muſt pierce the Churches heart, that thoughts of many may be diſcovered, a time of perſecution muſt help to cure the diviſions amongſt the godly, and bring them together in the furnance, which proſperity could not doe; yea, it is oft ſeen, which former ages can alſo witneſs, that the very undoing of the Church hath been Gods bleſt way, to keep her from being undone.

THE SECOND BRANCH

DOth concern theſe *Scripture threatnings which are held forth in the word, with a reſpect to the viſible Church*, and againſt a people profeſſing the Goſpel, that no priviledges they have above others shall exeem them from judgment, yea and from very ſad ſtrokes, he hath knowen them above the reſt of the World, he will contend with them moſt ſeverely becauſe of ſin, and ſuch particular evils as we find the Word threatneth.

Itou-

I touched a little some Scripture threatnings, in the preceeding argument as concerned Christians in their privat experience; what I here intend is to point at this truth, as it is written in the providences, and judgments of every time to mens observation, how judgments from the Lord, which point, as with the finger, at the abounding sins of that time, do reach a land, and particular Churches, according to the threatnings of the word; this is indeed manifest, that the greatest promises made to a people, we find backed with saddest threatnings, and accordingly we find the greatest monuments of wrath have usually been set up, where sometimes the largest offers of the Gospel were, yea, that the anger of the Lord may draw so deep against a people professing his name, as to make their land desolate, and the high wayes thereof mourn; for in this precinct of the Church doth both judgment and mercy most eminently shine forth, and the Lords way there doth differ from that he hath with any other people.

Now to clear this grave truth a litle, how these threatnings of the word, against a nation, and people because of sin are also verifyed in their judgments, I shall touch a few instances, that are most known, and obvious, where we may lay the word, and observation of the Church together, and see how they answer one the other.

Frist we find the *Threatnings of the word do point at the time of a peoples judgment*, 1 *Thes.* 2. *ver.* 16. *Rev.* 14. *ver.* 15. 18. That when they fill up the measure of their sin, and their cup is full, the Lord will not then defer the execution; until the cup of the Amorites was full he did let them alone; and we find answer deferred to the cry of the souls under the altar, for aven-

avenging their blood on Antichriſt, becauſe that accurſed party had yet more to do againſt the Church, and the Saints more to ſuffer under their hand.

Now to witneſs the accomplishement of this; let us but conſider what in all times may be obſerved. Firſt that there is an ordinary grouth. and height of ſin, which a land cometh to before deſtruction, ſome national, and univerſal ſpreading thereof, prodigious outbreakings, the utter rejecting of reproof, which shew that a peoples caſe muſt then be on ſome turn, yea, that ſtrange, and unuſuall ſinning, uſeth to go before ſome ſtrange ſtroke. 2. Before judgement come, is it not ſeen, how the ſin of a people hath become ſo daring, that it hath had a loud cry? yea, their caſe hath been ſuch as did juſtify the Lords procedure againſt them, even in the conſcience of all lookers, that he did it not without much cauſe. 3. Is it not eaſy for ſuch as are wiſe to know the times, to ſee night coming on a land, when ſin is at ſome dreadful height, by conſidering the word and the Lords uſual way with a people in ſuch a caſe? Yea, hath there not then been ſome ſpecial forewarnings, a more then ordinary impreſſion of judgement upon the ſpirits of the godly? the hiding of many of them in the grave, which, as threatning preſages, hath shewed the near approach of a ſtroke. 4. There doth not uſually want even ſome Noah, or Jonas, the Miniſters of God ſent forth to threaten, who as watchmen upon the wall are diſcerning hazard at diſtance, yea, with an obſervable preſſure then upon their ſpirit, aud a more then ordinary aggreement amongſt themſelves to cry out, and give the people warning, when the time of judgement hath been drawing near.

2. It is clear, *there are ſome ſpecial evils, and ſins*

of a

of a time, which we find the word moſt dreadfully doth threaten, yea in a peculiar way it doth put a mark upon them that though the Lord ſhould paſſe by many infirmities in a Church, and people profeſſing his name; yet, for ſuch, and ſuch ſins as we find, in *Amos* 1, *ver.* 2. he will not turn away the punishment thereof, but hath ſolemnly declared, by his truth and faithfulnes, that theſe ſhall not paſſe without ſome viſible mark, even before the world, of his anger: now in this the Scripture is clear, and lets us ſee there are ſome ſins more particularly threatned, ſome land-deſtroying ſins that have as it were the marke ſet on them, which doe eſpecially provoke the holy indignation, and jealouſie of God; ſuch as *idolatry*, corrupting the Worship of God; *Perjury, and Covenant-breaking*, ſhall they break my Covenant, and eſcape ſaith the Lord, *Ezek.* 17: *ver.* 15. alſo departing from God, and his way, for this the land ſhall be deſolat as in *Ierem.* 9: *ver.* 12, 13. yea blood guiltines which the earth ſhall not cover, and for which the ſword ſhall not depart, even from the houſe & family of David, 2 *Sam.* 12. 10.

Now to evidence the accomplishment hereof I ſhall point at ſome things moſt obvious to the obſervation of every time, how terribly the Lord uſeth to plead for ſuch things, and by ſome exemplary ſtroke, and judgement point them out, as we find them particularly ſet by themſelves in the word, and threatnings thereof.

Firſt how in theſe ſins, thus marked, men may ſee how their judgements uſe not wholly to be deferred to another world, but though much is oft paſſed here, and laid over to that laſt, and great judgement, yet, upon ſuch ſins the Lord hath put ſome mark of his diſpleaſure, even in this life, 2. That for theſe he uſeth

uſeth to contend, before the ſun, and in the view of men: his judgements are indeed oft ſecret, and doe conſume as a moth, but upon ſuch ſins we may frequently ſee, ſome publik, and viſible ſtroke is made to follow that the world cannot paſſe without a remark. 3. That the Lord alſo uſeth to be a very ſwift witneſs againſt ſuch evils, for as we find the oppreſſion of the Church hath a lowd cry, and the blood of the ſaints *a how long*? it is alſo ſeen theſe forementioned ſins do much haſten judgement, ſo as ſeldome that generation paſſeth away without ſome witneſs thereto; it is rarely found that ſome great revolt of a people from God, and breaking Covenant with him, doth ly long over unpunished, nor doth the hoary head of the violent, and bloody man go oft to the grave in peace. 4. That theſe ſins uſe to be followed with ſome very dreadful, and eminent ſtroke, which have made the land deſolat, their cities ſometime waſt, and a ruinous heap, yea, houſes great, and fair to be without inhabitants; ſo as men have with aſtonishment enquired, why is all this comed to paſſe; and it was eaſy to anſwer, even for ſuch, and ſuch evils hath the Lord done this, according to his word. 5. That a divine hand uſeth to be moſt diſcernable in the punishment of ſuch ſins becauſe of a very clear reſemblance betwixt them, and the ſtroke, which hath forced their own conſcience, as well as of onlookers to confeſſe the Righteouſnes of God therein. 6. That the Lord will put ſome mark of his anger on the choiſeſt of his ſervants for any acceſſion to ſuch ſins, theſe to whom he hath given their ſoul for a prey, have yet got a ſore outward ſtroke, upon ſuch an account, which hath followed them to the grave; for this the ſword ſhall not depart from Davids houſe: Idolatry rent the Kingdome from the poſte-

posterity of Salomon. Jonas shall not escape for his rebellion, yea, God was wroth with Moses, and no intreaty shall hinder his dying in the wildernes. I may adde, hath not the Lords controversy on this ground even reached their posterity, which may shew that these threatnings are sad earnest, and such sins are not more particularly pointed at in the word, then they have been in after ages made exemplary in judgement.

3. *A peoples lukwarmenesse, their slighting of the gospel*, and not receiving the love of the truth, we find sadly threatned in the word, *Rev. 3. ver. 15. 16. Thess. 2. ver. 10, 11.* and truely we must say they have not fallen to the ground in any age without an accomplishment, as frequent observation can witness. Frist how a peoples entring upon a Religious way, their pursuing a form of reformation, and not thorough for God therein, but on carnal grounds, hath thus put them in a worse condition then before, for truely mens hypocrisy, in going about a good work doth threaten more, then the performance thereof doth promise. Jehu got a temporal reward but his posterity must at length reckon for all the blood of Jezreel. 2. That no people use to be further from getting good of the gospel then such who have been under most clear, and greatest convictions, so at it is found, there is oft more accesse to gain amongst the savages, then these who have sit their day while the tide did flow, yea, ministers have found most discouragement to labour in these parts where the word hath been long preached with power. 3. It is seen, how light not improved will turn a People more grosse, and is usually followed with some remarkable grouth in sin, that the more the word doth put a restraint on mens corrup-

ruption, the more it rageth; ſo as it may be obſerved what a very black dy, and collour, the powerful preaching of the Goſpel hath put upon a People, as a viſible mark of judgement on ſuch who profit not thereby. 4. Is it not ſeen how mens formality in the matters of God hath been oft punished even with the taking away of the forme? Yea, that ſeldome errour, and deluſion doth want a harveſt amongſt a People who receive not the truth in love. 5. Hath not ſlighting of the Goſpel been at laſt followed with ſome viſible reſtraint, and inhibition, both upon the ordinances, and diſpenſers thereof, a judicial withdrawing of the Spirit, as to the work of converſion, and conviction, whereby the Lord doth plainly ceaſe to be a reprover to ſuch, yea, even ſaith, bind up the Law, and ſeal the Teſtimony.

4. *The Word doth alſo threaten carnal Security* (a diſeaſe whereof the Church is oft in great hazard) yea, we find it holds forth a certain connexion betwixt ſpiritual judgements upon a People, and ſome outward ſtrokes to follow thereon, that thoſe who are under that firſt woe, and plague upon their ſpirits, are then near to ſome judgement upon their perſons, and may expect a sharp wakening; in hearing they ſhall not underſtand, &c. but the cloſe is, until their cities be conſumed without inhabitants, and there be an utter deſolation, yea, we find judgement doth begin as a moth in that 5. of Hos. but in the 14. ver. it doth turn at laſt to be a lion. We may truely ſay the fulfilling of this hath in all ages of the Church been obvious. 1. That as the firſt part of the Churches deliverance is uſually ſpiritual, ſo it is found the firſt ſtep of judgement, and the execution thereof againſt a People, hath been upon their ſpirits; that ſerious diſcerners of the time might know that the night was faſt coming

ming on, and ſome ſad outward ſtroke on a land, by the abounding of ſpiritual judgements. 2. It is clear the moſt dreadful ſtrokes that ever come on a particular Church, doe uſually find it in ſuch a caſe, judicially hardned, and under many warnings plagued with ſecurity; thus did the floud finde the old World, and before that deſolating ſtroke on Jeruſalem by the Romans, were not the Jewes in ſuch a caſe. Salvain can tell how it was with the African Churches, before that dreadful inundation of the Gothes, and Vandals, yea, the Churches records in all ages doe witneſs that before any ſad ſtroke or perſecution came upon a People, a deep ſleep, and lethargie, hath been previous thereto; gray haires might have been ſeen upon them, and the Word doth even ſhew that this will be the laſt diſeaſe whereof the Church ſhall be ſick before the great day of the Lord. 3. It is alſo ſeen how ſpiritual judgements when they grow upon a people, make great diſpatch, and do quickly ripen for ſome further ſtroke, that when men have run down their conſcience and are paſt reproof of the word, going on from evil to worſe, the caſe cometh then to be clear, and ready for the finall diſcuſſion of the proceſſe.

5. *The word doth denounce woe againſt the troublers of the Church*, and theſe who are her perſecutors, that the Lord ſhall recompence tribulation to ſuch, and plead with her oppreſſours, the accomplishment whereof hath been truely manifeſt, yea to the obſervation even of the world. *Iſai.* 10: 5, 2 *Theſſ.* 1: v. 6. 1. That emient oppreſſors of the Church have ſeldome gone out of the world, without ſome remark of divine anger upon them; ſurely if there were a record of ſuch inſtances that in every age hath been conſpicuous, men ſhould be forced to ſee and ſay that the moſt

moſt noted enemies, and perſecutors of the ſaints have been alſo the moſt convincing & noted examples of judgement in the time. 2. That the Churces ſuffering uſeth to go before a day of vengeance on the inſtruments thereof; we find Jehu got an outward rewad for executing the judgement of God on his enemies; but as for theſe men who have been the rod of the Church it hath been ſeen that they have not long wanted ſome ſcourge as ſore upon themſelves, as they have been to his People, and that at laſt theſe have payed dear for their ſervice. 3. We may ſee how this alſo doth help to finish the controverſy of God, with men, and their houſes, that for this he hath taken many away in the midſt of their dayes, & made them ceaſe to be, who would not ceaſe to trouble the Church, while they had a being; yea that he had taken them in his own hand, whom men could not reach, & made their down-caſting in the midſt of themſelves.

6. *Doth not the Scripture threaten carnal confidence*, in a People, the putting of their truſt in man or in in any outward inſtruments, *Ier.* 17. *ver.* 5. 6. 17. to clear the accomplishment whereof, let us but compare the word, and the Churches obſervation together, and we will find. 1. That outward meanes have never more miſcaried then when moſt promiſing, and when there was greateſt expectation from the ſame, yea, that very eminent inſtruments when much leaned to, have been obſervably blaſted, and made to shrink under ſuch a burden. 2. That theſe whom the Lord had made much uſe of, yea, honoured to be great inſtruments in the ſervice of the Church, have oft had ſome diſcernable blot, to reprove mens overlading of inſtruments with their eſteem, a Tertullian, an Origen in auncient times, yea, even a Luther, in theſe latter ages

muſt goe with ſome halt to the grave. 3. That many who have been uſeful in the Church for a time, the Lord doth oft lay by, yea, maketh not uſe of them to the end, but, the laſt may be made firſt, and truely that exceſſe in mens eſteem, putting a further weight on ſome meanes, then they could bear, hath oft helped to render many uſeleſs. 4. Is it not alſo ſeen, how one extremity is thus plagued with another? None more ready to ſhrink in a day of trouble, then ſuch who at a diſtance ſeemed moſt daring, yea, none more ready to fall in that exceſſe of undervaluing inſtruments, then theſe who have moſt exceeded upon the other hand.

7. *Doe we not find the word threaten, and in a ſpecial way point at corrupt miniſters, unfaithful watchmen* who give not warning to the Church, theſe ſhepheards that feed themſelves, but not the flock, the leaders of a people that cauſe them to err, and by their practice to ſtumble at the law *Mal.* 2: *ver.* 3, *ver.* 9.

The accomplishment whereof hath in all ages been very diſcernable. Firſt how ſuch have uſually been moſt noted as the greateſt and moſt violent enemies which the Church hath, at any time, had, yea that no courſe hath been ſo evil and groſs that hath wanted ſome of theſe to help it on, whoſe hatred, and perſecution of the Godly hath been found to exceed the moſt openly profane and profligat in that time. 2. That as they are particularly threatned above others in the word; ſo they get alſo ſome remarkable caſt above others in their judgement, and having once loſt their favour, become vile, and loathſome even to the worſt of men, are contemptible in the eyes of ſuch whom they ſeek in a ſinful way to pleaſe, yea have a worſe favour, then the prophaneſt wretches, that being verified in them,

them; *Corruptio optimi, pessima.* 3. That these do seldome make a good retreat from an evil way; so as it is an usual observation, it is rare for Church-men to repent, or a fallen starr to shine again. 4. Are not such oft smitten even in their gifts, which we may see wither, and drie up upon them while not faithfully improved, yea, to the very conviction of their hearers to have lost that edge which once they had in their ministry? 5. I must add another remark (though I desire to deale with fear, and much tenderness, in such an application of the judgement of God) how the Lord doth oft put some note of his wrath on the children, and offspring of unfaithful Ministers, that it hath been seen none more wretched and grosse; whereto as their evil practice, and example hath been a special help, so likewise are they thus punished of the Lord, who did not seek to beget Children to him, by the Word, but through their way did rather cause many to err and fal.

THE THIRD BRANCH.

HAving spoke something how the Scripture both has to the promises, and threatnings thereof is evidently fulfilled in the Lords ordinary way of procedure with his Church, I would a litle further follow this argument, *how this also hath a manifold accomplishment, even in these most strange and dark passages of providence, whereat men are ready to stumble* and challenge the spotlesse righteousnes of God, and his faithfulnes therein; but if we lay them to that measure, and line of the word which is stretched over the whole work of providence, we will see how well these doe aggree, and answer one to the other, yea that all the paths wherein God walketh towards his

Church; and people, are surely mercy, and truth.

To clear this I shall point at some footsteps of the providence of God in the world, and about the Church which would seem most dark, yea a contradiction to his word, and promise, but are plain and manifest, if weighed in the ballance of the sanctuary, where we may have a satisfying look, and resolution of these things which otherwayes would be too hard for us to understand, and may see, how straight these paths are which we thought crooked; yea, how easy and passable, the greatest deeps of providence would be, both as to Gods way with his Church, and in our own particular case, when once they are set over against the word. I shall touch this a little in these following instances.

1. *It may seem strange how the Churches trouble and strait is oft seen to encrease, with the first stirrings of her deliverance*; yea, when some remarkable mercy, and outgate is in the bringing forth, the first step thereof would seem to put her further aback, and in a worse condition then before. This is indeed a piece of the Lords way with his Church which in many instances may be witnessed, but let us take the word along therewith, and we will find. 1. How the Church is oft at the brink of the grave even when her case is upon a turn, and how it is congruous to his way (whose paths are in the deep waters, who cloatheth himself with darknes, that men should not find any thing after him; or lay down absolute conclusions concerning his dealing) that the motions of providence should be oft so perplexed, and various. 2. Did not the case of the Church in Egypt seem much worse, their burdens doubled upon them, even when their deliverance was breaking up? 3. Ioseph

to

to be sold as a slave, and in Egypt turned in to a dungeon would seem steps of providence, very unlike the thing which God was driving at thereby, and yet we see how kindly these did work towards the same. 4. The Church in *Micah.* 4: *vir.* 10. When she was even at the door next to a deliverance, her tryal was even at the greatest height, *be in pain, and labour to bring forth, for ye shall goe to Babylon and there be delivered.*: but sorest pangs in the birth do usually promise the best issue. 5. It was the step of the providence of God, which of all seemd most dreadful to the Church in Ester, the sealing of the decree, and sending it forth to root out the whole seed of the Iewes, while Haman still flowrished, but lo this was the very step that wrought most throughly for her deliverance, and is not a wet mourning seed time a Scripture-presage of a good harvest.

2. *The sore interruptions which a peoples endeavours for Reformation, and to promote the Kingdome of Christ have met wit,* even when set about with a clear call, yea, solemn and serious engadgements to God, would seem strange, and a shaking piece of providence; and truely this is oft seen, as an usual attendant on reformation, how unsuperable like difficultyes, and unexpected lets do grow up in the way thereof; thus when Luther, and other instruments were raised up in Germany, to pursue the Churches Reformation, what cruel edicts were then set forth to give it a dash? division among themselves, the rising up of the Boors, & Anabaptists: what a pure, and through reformation was on foot under Edward the sixth in England, and what a dreadful storm did quickly break it up, for that time: and I would adde, what the present case of the Church in Brittain, and Ireland may at this day witness, where once the Lord

ſo eminently appeared in a begun Reformation, which now is at ſo great a ſtand, but let us go in to the ſcripture with this and we will find. 1. There is a vive portraicture of providence in the affaires of the Church held forth in that viſion which Ezekiel had of the wheeles at the river Chebar, whoſe myſterious motions, and turnings ſo croſs one to the other, without any diſcord therein, as to the end, to which they were directed, doth witnes the rational, and wile conduct of providence: the Lords work about his Church is a moſt shadowed and elaborat piece, which men cannot ſee, before their eye, as they ſee behind upon a review, while ordinary cauſes do oft vary in their operation, yea, goe out of the common road, but ſcripture will make this very plain. 2. Was not Nehemiah, Ezra, and Zerobabel at their work, and duty, and had an expreſſe call for building of the temple, yet, how great, and frequent interruptions did they find, ſometimes environed with difficulties, *Zach 4: ver. 7. Who art thou great mountain before Zerobabel?* Yea, they were put to hold the ſword and build, to watch and work at once, becauſe of their enemies. 3. What a very ſore backſet was the Church at *Hab. 3. Revive thy work ô Lord in the midſt of the yeares*, this was both a great and long interruption, yea, doe we not find her almoſt at a *non plus* with a queree which no viſible apperance could anſwer, *by whom ſhall Jacob ariſe for he is ſmall?* 4. We find a ſpecial reformation ſet on foot by Hezekiah with a ſolemn Covenant, by the Princes, Prieſts, and body of the People, with a ſetting up of the pure Worship, and ordinances of God, but lo a sharp ſtorm is ſoon after, by Sennacherib, yea Hezekiah ſcarcely is in his grave, when his Son doth bring in corruption, & perſecution both at once; and when the

the christian Church in the times of the Apostles begun to flowrish, succesſe following the Gospel, did not a sad interruption, and scattering follow, *Act.* 8. 5. This is promised that Zions walls shall even in troublesome times be built, and her being brought to a heap of rubbish was but making way for a further advance, that in the building of her again the Lord might appear in his glory; and is it not clear, that Christ coming in the Gospel, and power thereof to purge his Church, and carry on a reformation. *Mal.* 3. *ver.* 4. proveth a searching, and trying time which men cannot endure, for the power of the Word, and clear discovery of sin, and other shaking dispensations which doe usually attend such times and torment them who dwell on the earth, yea, and put the Devil, and corruption of men aloft, with all rage to oppose the same.

3. *That a sad overclouding, and darknes should come on a land after most special manifestation of the power and glory of God therein*, and that a time of the Gospel with much light should be so neer a forerunner of wrath, and judgement, would seem a strange piece of providence, and cause a serious enquiry how such eminent appearances of God for a people, such great confirmations, observable succes for a time, with many signal encouragements, should all seem to resolve in a desolating stroke, and ruine? This may be instanced in that Protestant war in France where instruments were remarkably raised, fitted of the Lord for the service of that time, had much of his presence, and countenance, yet to resolve thus in a bloody massacre; likewayes these confederat German Princes, *Saxony, and Landgrave of Hesse*, Men eminent for piety, carried forth with much zeal for God, for defence of the truth, yea, in the be-

ginning of that war having many promiſing encouragements, yet, remarkably deſerted of the Lord with very ſad-like conſequences following the ſame. Let us conſider alſo the late Bohemiam war, ſtated upon neceſſary defence of Religion and liberty, and at firſt attended with ſome ſmiling providences, ſhould reſolve into ſo great a deſolation, aud ruine: yea, the Church of Ireland, O, what a dreadful maſſacre of the proteſtants there did quickly follow one of the moſt ſolemn times of the power of God and outpowring of the Spirit that we ever heard of ſince the dayes of the Apoſtles. I confeſſe this may have a ſtrange aſpect, & is a part of the marvellous wayes of the Lord, but when we take it in to the word, we will find there is no jar, or diſcord here, for. 1. It might ſeem as ſtrange, and aſtoniſhing what Baruch got from the Lord in anſwer to his complaint, *Ierem.* 45. that he would pluck up what he had planted, and caſt down that which he had built, for a work to be thus thrown down, where the Lord had once ſo eminently appeared, and given his People many confirmations might then occaſion great thoughts of heart, yet the unſpotted righteouſnes of God, and his truth was apparent therein; yea, after that diſcourſe, and all theſe large promiſes, which Chriſt gave his diſciples in that ſixteenth of Iohn, we find all is ſhut up with that, the houre is coming, and now is that ye ſhall be ſcattered. 2. What ſtrange providences did tryſt the Church in the wildernes, ſometime brought back to the red ſea, tryed with hunger, and nakedneſſe, conſumed with various ſtrokes, and many yeares wandering until moſt of that generation, who came out of Egypt filled their graves in the journey, and yet this was after moſt eminent confirmations, and as clear ſignes of Gods preſence as ever a People had

had. 3. We find a publick reformation moſt zealouſly proſecute by Ioſias, which looked like the renewed eſpouſales of that land with God, by a ſolemn Covenant, yet, quickly after night came on that land with a long captivity, and Ioſias did fall by the ſword 4. Was there not a bright ſun-blink, and flowrishing plantation of the Goſpel in Judea a little before the deſolation of that land by the Romans, yea, we will find it clear from the word that times of much light, and reformation doe much ſooner ripen for a ſtroke then any other times. 5. It is very manifeſt that particular Churches have their day where the Goſpel hath its appointed work, and their ſtroke at laſt may reach the length of removing the candleſtick, I truely think that ſad inſtance of Bohemia's caſe may have this obſervable in it, that it had longer day, & enjoyment of the light even from the times of *Iohn Hus*, and *Ierom of Prague* which was neer an 100 yeares before there was any day-break on other parts, ſo that we would conſider if their night did come ſoon on, that their day was alſo much longer, yea, the ſtroke might tryſt with the ebb of the tyde, when their harveſt was much gathered in, under ſo long a continuance of the Goſpel, though I dare not think, the Lords work is utterly extinct there, but that Bohemias dead, & withered root hath life yet in it and ſhall once again bud forth.

4. *Is it not uſually ſeen when judgement cometh on a land, that the Godly get the firſt ſtroke?* but let us alſo conſider this in the word, where it is clear. 1. That judgement muſt begin at the houſe of God, and the green tree; and that the Churches trouble, and perſecution is a forerunner of vengeance on her adverſaries, do we not find, there is a cup of the jugdement of God? And O the laſt is of a ſtrong

compoſition, for the wine is red and mixed, and the dreg very thick which is reſerved for the troublers of the Church, and for ſuch who are at eaſe in a day of her grief, and truely they have the advantage that drink firſt, *Bleſt are they whom thou chaſteneſt, &c. That they may reſt in the day of their adverſity untill the pit be digged for the wicked*, yea, *Rev.* 3: 10. we find keeping of the word of patience, which doth import ſuffering to the Church, goeth before ſome more univerſal ſtroke; & in that day proveth the ſafety, & protection of the People of God. 2. It is alſo clear that men may be raiſed up of the Lord, & followed with ſucceſſe, when he hath them for a rod to his church, but that at laſt Ashur the rod of my wrath will I caſt in the fire, ſaith the Lord, it is truly an evidence of great wrath upon a party to be made the rod, & executioners of judgement upon the People of God, for they ſhall pay for it, by ſome ſadder ſtroke then any trouble or ſuffering whereof they have been inſtruments.

5. *That proſperity, and ſucceſſe ſhould ſoilow ſometimes the worſt of men in an evill courſe, and cauſe*, ſuch a concurrence, and ſeries of providence, as ſeemeth to ſmile on them even to the bringing of their ſinful devices to paſſe, while the People of God have been made to fall in a juſt quarrel before their adverſary, would ſeem an aſtonishing providence, but let us lay it foreagainſt the Word, and there we will ſee. 1. That there is a proſperity which tendeth to deſtruction, *Prov.* 1. *ver.* 32. the tabernacles of the robbers proſper, *Iob.* 12. *ver.* 6. and they that provoke God are ſecure, into whoſe hands he bringeth aboundantly, but they doe not ſee that wickednes is its own punishment, and how it is a dreadful ſtroke to thrive in an ill courſe. Was not the Church ſhaken with ſuch a providence, *Mal.* 3 *ver.* 15.

ver. 15. Yea, tempted to call the proud happy, but in the ver. 18. They were taught from further obſervation to diſcern, and to put a difference between the righteous, and the wicked. 2. Doe we not find that even the ſignes, & predictions of falſe Prophets in favors of a ſinful way may come to paſſe, *Deut.* 13: *ver.* 1, 2. Whereof the Church is there warned, and Gods intent in the ſame cleared, that it is for the tryal of his People, whither they will love, and fear the Lord, & cleave to his way, when providence would ſeem to shine on a crooked path. 3. Did not ſucceſſe for a time attend Abſolom? Iſrael as one man went after him, yea, the friends and counſellours of David; a fair wind did alſo favour Haman in his eſſay to ruin the Church. Jeremy is almoſt shaken with this, *yea they have taken root, yea, they grow, and bring forth fruit*, but is not this at laſt uſually found an ominous weathergall before a ſtorm? though the brutish man knoweth not, nor fooles lay it to heart for what the wicked doth oft ſpring, and flowrish; I would add, Iſraels falling before Benjamin, it was an aſtonishing like providence; and Habakuck was put to a ſtand with ſuch a thing, why the Lord lookt on, while the wicked devoured the righteous; Yea, Joshua was to cry out in an amazement, O Lord what shall I ſay, when Iſrael turneth their back before their enemies? But we have alſo the Lords intent therein witneſſed by his word, that this is to humble and prove his People, that he may doe them good in the latter end, and thus he beateth them off from all carnal grounds of confidence, he woundeth them to a cure, that by bringing them low, he may raiſe, and fit them for a further mercy.

6. *What great diſappointments hath the Church met with*

with, when outward grounds of confidence, and ordinary meanes have been moſt promiſing, as it is a thing moſt true, ſo it may ſeem ſtrange at the firſt look, but let us bring it to the word & the caſe will be there anſwered. *Deut.* 32. *Why ſhould one chaſe a thouſand, but becauſe their rock hath ſold them*, and therefore their ſtrength is gone with the Lords departing from them, for, when a time of judgement is come, even the mighty then find not their hands, counſel faileth to the ancient, ordinary means bring not forth their wonted effects, which Solomon sheweth and after ages have oft ſeen, the race not ever to the ſwift nor the battel to the ſtrong, it is alſo clear from the word, how threatning a condition that is, for the People of God to be much carried out after meanes, or lifted up therewith, *Iſai.* 30. they will ride on horſes, and this ſhall be their punishment, but on the other hand the Lords way, in bringing forth his greateſt works hath not been by might, and power, but oft by meanes moſt improbable, and unexpected,

7 *The long continuance of a heavy afflicting rod on the Church, without the appearance of an outgate*, or any return to much wreſtling, and prayer on that account, may ſeem a ſtrange ſtep in Gods way with his People. But the word will anſwer us in ſuch a caſe where it is clear. 1. That there are no bounds in the Scripture ſet to the continuance of a trial, it doth not tell how long a sharp ſtorm may ly on, either as to the Church, or any particular Chriſtian; for it is a piece of the Lords ſecret counſel, but not of that which is revealed, it is enough that we know from it that men cannot make the Churches ſuffering longer, then Gods time. 2. It was a long terme that of Iſraels tryal in Egypt & after under the captivity, three hundred

hundred and ninty dayes muſt the Church ly on her left ſide. O how many a ſad day, and wearyſome night was there in that word, 70 weekes are determined upon thy people, and city Jeruſalem. 3. Have not the Saints under a long trouble been almoſt the length of blaſpemy, in their complaints, *Iſa.* 40. *ver.* 27. *My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgement paſt over from my God.* Daniel, how preſſing with the Lord was he that he would hearken, and do, and not defer, and yet the return cometh not until the firſt year of Cyrus; yea, that cry of the ſouls under the altar, *How long*, doth it not even get a dilatory anſwer? For thus the Lord doth oft interpoſe his long ſuffering for ſome time, betwixt his people, and avenging of them. 4. It is alſo clear that there are many prayers before the throne, the return whereof is ſuſpended, and an anſwer to Chriſtians, in their particular, until that time when God ſhall build up Zion, and then the prayer of the deſtitute ſhall be remembred even as to Chriſtians privat enlargement, when the Church ſhall be raiſed up. 5. We know the Churches enemies muſt have time to ripen, & it is not a ſtorm of a few dayes, that will purge away the filth of the Daughter of Zion, too ſoon letting out of a ſore may cauſe it undercot, and gather new matter, and truely the word can reſolve us in this, that one minut ſooner then Gods time would not be his peoples mercy.

8. It is oft ſeen *when there is ſome remarkable work of God on foot in a land, and ſome great outpouring of the ſpirit, how Sathan ſetteth up ſome uſual counterfeit thereof*, and bringeth forth ſomething of his work in ſuch a time with a very ſtrange reſemblance of the ſame; thus, with the preaching of the freedome of grace, and a clear diſcovery of that truth, did Libertiniſme

tiniſme under a very ſpecious pretext, ſpring up. Thus we find the Anabaptiſt, and Antinomian party, ſet up in Germany, to run down a Church-reformation under the ſhew of a more pure, and ſpiritual way; and of late did not Familiſme in England under pretext of a more ſpiritual diſpenſation caſt off the very letter of the Scripture, turning it over in an Allegory, and in behalf of the liberty of propheſying, cry down a ſtanding miniſtry; but though this may ſeem ſtrange, yet, the Scripture is very clear concerning it. 1. That even Sathan himſelf is transformed into an Angel of light; and in no ſhape proveth more dangerous to the Church. 2. That the moſt dreadful errours, and a falſe way will oft come near to the choiſeſt exerciſes of the ſaints, and have ſuch a reſemblance to the ſame, that if it were poſſible the very elect ſhould be deceived. 3. Was there not a Simon Magus with falſe miracles ſet up over againſt the Apoſtles, and when the time of the Meſſias drew near, did not then a Theudas, and Judas of Galilee, break forth to amuſe the people? We find alſo an altar from Damaſcus, ſet up beſide that which was ſhewed to Moſes the Servant of the Lord in the mount, yea, when Moſes, and Aaron was giving Pharaoh a ſign, and did ſhew forth the marvellous power of God then did the Magicians caſt down their rod alſo to counterfeit the ſame, by which the heart of Pharaoh was hardned.

9. *The abounding of much errour, and hereſie, now in the time the Goſpel*, with that ſwift growth thereof, which is oft ſeen where the light moſt clearly ſhineth, would ſeem ſtrange, yea, is a thing whereat many are ready to ſtumble, and thus to challenge the way of God: But is not the Scripture in this clearly verifyed ſo that this piece of providence, which

which is so shaking to many, if we take the word along with it, might be a very convincing confirmation to us of the same, for. 1. We find the Apostles, yea, Christ himself hath given expresse warning thereof, that this should be one of the special, and greatest tryals of the Christian Church, whereof the Old Testament we find doth litle mention, that trial not concerning the Church then so much, as these after-times under the Messias Kingdome; wherein the event may be clearly seen, to answer these predictions, which are so frequent thereof in the New Testament. 2. Doth not the event also answer the word as to that particular way, and method, how errour should be propagated, which is there clearly foretold, by subtil undermining, under the pretext of liberty with plausible insinuations, so that we must say not only the matter but with all these discernable tokens, even upon the manner, the word is made out. 3. Doe we not find this should be a judgement on men who receive not the love of the truth, and that after flourishing times of the Church, when he who rideth on the white horse is gone forth, the black horse, and his rider doth quickly follow, and truely it is seen that in the time of hotteſt persecutions, the Church hath not been so much troubled with this adversary, as when she did begin to get rest, and most of outward liberty; nor yet so at the first breaking up of the Gospel, as after some time of its continuance. 4. Doth not the event likewise thus answer the word, that in the breaking out of heresy in the Church, a spirit of errour, the dephts and mighty working of Satan should be seen, which I am sure is undenyable, how manifeſt the interposing of these powers of darknes is therein, if we consider, 1. Its marvellous dispatch, and growth like a plague, and the arrow that flieth by

day.

day. 2. With what a discernable fury, and violence men are thus driven, as with an impetuous current, yea, oft a change on their very natural temper is seen most evidently. 3. These monstruous, and horrid things, which are oft brought forth, may shew whose hand is in such a birth. 4. That usual tendency that at last errour hath to loosnes in practice, which as it poisoneth the spring, and corrupteth the leading faculty the judgement, so we see, it moveth towards the vital spirits and doth influence the conversation; and the leprosy in the head breaketh forth in blaines through the whole body. 5. And do we not see how many grosse, and profane have been carried with this spate, how few get leave to stand, but are still carried from one step to another, and it is clear the world did never put out its rage so much against that way, as it hath done against the truth, except when some outward interest maketh it a quarrel.

10. *These great shakings, and commotions that use to attend the Gospel when it cometh in power to a land,* may also seem strange, yea, are ready to make many stumble. But is not the word verified herein, what great stirs, and trouble did tryst the Church after great light in pouring out of the spirit, *Ioel. 2. v. 29.* we may there likewayes see, how this giveth the World an Alarum, maketh the Kings, and great men of the earth run together, to hinder the rising of Christs Kingdome, *Psal. 2. ver. 3.* let us break his bonds, &c. for truely in all ages Christs rising in the Gospel hath cast a terrour to its enemies, that this should be their fall and ruine, when the Apostle hath an effectual doore opened in his ministery he hath also much opposition thereto, but on the other hand all is still, and quiet while the strong man doth

keep

keep the houſe, yea, it is clear from the word, that where the Goſpel cometh there is a red flag hung forth, that if men will not receive the ſame and ſubject to him who rideth on the white horſe, one ſhall come after whoſe worke is to take peace from the earth, to put the world in a flame, and to accomplish the judgement of a deſpiſed goſpel, who ſhall devide betwixt the husband, and wife, the parents, and children, wherein our bleſt Lord Jeſus is expreſſe, *Math.* 10. *ver.* 34. *I come not to ſend peace on the earth, but rather a ſword*, vvhich might ſeem ſtrange from him; but it is to tell men if they vvill not embrace the offer of his peace they ſhall not have peace among themſelves, for the meſſage of the goſpel muſt either be the beſt, or the worſt ſight that ever a land had.

11. *This may ſeem ſtrange how in all ages men of greateſt parts, and learning, are ſuch uſual oppoſers of the truth*, yea, hovv the moſt ſober, and calme vvill even appear violent in their vvay, the more the goſpel is followed vvith power; but, O! how well doth this anſwer the ſcripture, for the vviſdome of this vvorld is enmity to God, 1 *Cor.* 3. *ver.* 19. not many vviſe according to the flesh comparatively, vvith theſe vvho hate the truth; of all the beaſts of the field was not the ſerpent Satans choice? and if there be an Achitophel in the time, at him he will have a ſpecial pull, to ſuch the ſimplicity of the goſpel is foolishnes, whereat they ſtumble; to ſuch Chriſt is a rock of offence, we find the light doth torment them that dwell in the earth, will cauſe men blaſpheme and diſcover that, which would not appear, whileſt they got leave to enjoy their ſinful peace without diſturbance.

12. *Theſe ſtrange judgments which may ſometimes*

befal the Saints in their outward lot, yea, sometimes attended with some very astonishing circumstances would at the first look put men to a stand and to challenge the holy way of God. But let us weigh it in that ballance of the Scripture, and we will find. 1. That such hath been the complaint of the Saints, the Lords wounding them with the wound of a cruel one; what a strange query is that in *Lament. 2: ver. 20. Behold, and consider, to whom thou hast done this shall the women eat the fruit of their womb, shall the Priest and Prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord*, yea, did it not even to Solomon seem strange, *Eccles. 8: ver. 14.* That there are just men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked. 2. It looked like some strange stroke which forced David to this complaint, my enemies cast iniquity on me, and say an evil disease, or as the original readeth it, a thing of Belial cleaveth to him; we find Iosias fell by the sword; Eli, with one stroke hath his sons killed, his Daughter in law dying, and himselfe falling from his seat, and breaking his neck; yea Aaron hath both his sons killed before his eyes, by an immediat stroke from the Lord. 3. The word doth also shew, there is no jar betwixt this, and the tenor of the Covenant which God hath made with his people, to punish their transgression with rods, yea, sometimes by a strange rod, while he taketh not his loving kindnesse from them, and doe we not find that a cleanly trial may tryst the saints which the world would think a dreadful judgement, for great sufferings may be ordered of the Lord, to give some great examples thereby, we have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord.

13. *The gross falling of these who have sometimes shined with much lustre in the Church* may be astonishing, but

but here also we may see the scripture made out, for it is clear. First that few instances of the most eminent of the Saints, we have on Scripture record, but there is some particular spot, and blemish also noted, a Noah, Lot, Moses and David, yea, under the new Testament that great Apostle, whose denyal of his master is set forth, to shew how far some may fall whom grace will again restore, and make up. 2. It is there clear, that some of understanding doe fall for a judgement to others, that such who will stumble, whose prejudice at the way of God is their choice, may thus further fall, and be broken. 3. The blest meaning and intent hereof we may there also read to Alarum men to watchfulnes, that such who stand may take heed lest they fall; to warrant also their adventuring on the grace of God, that none should scar to come in after such eminent examples.

14. *The contingency of events*, that we see many things in such a casual way fall out in the world, as by change onely without the rational conduct of providence (which doth infallibly direct things to a certain end,) this might at the first look, put men to a stand, yea, would seem to give Atheists some shadow to say, how doth God see or doth the God of Iacob regard? But upon a more serious enquiry setting the word over against it, O what a sweet exercise should it be to consider. 1. That though the providence of God in things here beneath moveth sutably to the nature of inferiour causes, whither necessary free, or contingent, not violenting them, or otherwayes making use of them, but according to their nature, so that though the event be necessary, and infallible, with a respect to the first cause, the determined counsel of God, it is nevertheless contingent

in reſpect of its neareſt cauſe; yet, this alſo on the other hand is clear, how theſe ſmalleſt, and moſt caſual motions doe certainly fall under that comprehenſive reach of providence, that even a ſparrow falleth not to the ground by gueſſe, Rebeccah cometh not with her pitcher to the well nor Ruth to glean in Boaz field at an adventure, but in theſe the providence of God muſt reach its end, and cannot miſcarry. 2. That theſe things which to us would ſeem moſt caſual we oft ſee in their tendency, and product, have been intended by the Lord, as a ſpecial mean for the promoting of his glory, wherein ſuch a wonderful tryſt and uniting of things in themſelves moſt remote for that end may be truely diſcerned, that if prejudice do not ſhut mens eyes, they muſt confeſſe this can be no blind chance but ſome higher counſel, and conduct of the ſame; what would look more contingent then that Ahaſuerus was indiſpoſed to ſleep and could have no reſt in the night, or that a reflexion of the ſun upon the waters ſhould make them appear as blood to the Children of Moab? But we ſee what great things the Lord is thus bringing about. 3. Is it not oft manifeſt how not the ſmalleſt caſuality; or circumſtance providence doth loſſe without ſome improvement thereof? yea, that it guideth the ſtroke of a mans ſword in the battel, and directeth the bullet to its aopointed mark, and doth evidently check the ſtarres and controll that fatal neceſſity, which we are ready to fear may or will follow their aſpect, and doth even determine theſe which in themſelves are moſt free, & abſolute, the heart, & wil of man; muſt not the crowing of the cock, the ſouldiers dividing of Chriſts garments fall out for an accomplishment of the Scripture, and though it was at a venture that that man drew the

bow

bow which sent Ahab to his grave, yet, it was no chance did direct the arrow between the very joynts of his armour. 4. Amidst the various emergents, and hazards of mens life, may not experience tell that surely things contingent are not abandoned to fortune, but there is a providence which doth number our haires, without which they cannot fall to the ground. O how astonishing may it be to think how surprizing hazards have been oft obviated? By what unexpected meanes men have been delivered from violent assaults, how help unlooked for hath even tryfted at a choke, and an extremity, yea, while their foot was slipping even betwixt their falling, and fall they have been tryfted with some remarkable cast of mercy. 5. Is it not easy to discern, how many accidents which seem most casual, yet by no humane prudence or industry can be prevented, but are observably brought about, and guided to fulfil the threatnings of the word on ungodly men, how was Sisera led in to the house of Iael, by other places, how should Hamans suit, for Mordecais death, tryst with that very morning, when the Kings thoughts were favourable to him, for it might seem had Haman been one day sooner he would have got his will.

(¶) This is a grave and serious subject, and in such a day should be much studied, when so many are ready to quarrel at the way of the Lord, and out of every thing suck poyson; when prejudices are now so universallie abounding against the truth, that we may see what a witness there is even in the most dark and astonishing steps of providence to the truth and faithfulness of God; yea how great a confirmation, we may thence have of our faith in such shaking times,

whilst we see how these are special grounds against Atheisme, & a most convincing refutation of the same, which are so much made use of to strengthen men in that way: I know the holy soveraignity of God should teach us to adore and keep silence, when we cannot fathom the depths of providence, and on this great satisfying truth we should stay, and fix our selves, when things seem strange to us, *He is the Lord and with him there is no unrighteousnes*; it is sure the condition of the damned in hell takes not off that obligation to declare his faithfulnes, and adore his unspotted justice; but O then it would cease to be hell if such a blessed frame could have a being there: however it is a necessaty and concerning duty when a matter seems too hard for us to understand, to enquire in the sanctuarie; there is a warrantable search after the works of God that we may know them: now besides these instances which have been already mentioned, I would yet further touch some few steps of the providence of God, with a speciall respect to this present time, which may seem very strange and be amazing; but when brought to that test of divine truth, will be found a most satisfying confirmation thereof.

1. It may seem strange to see the Church of Christ this day so universallie brought low, and in a suffering condition, whilst the whole earth besides is at such rest and quiet; that if we now look any where abroad, affliction and contempt from men is seen in a very great measure, to attend the profession of godlines, but more especially the power thereof; yea that almost in everie place the Church would seem to be upon a decay, and a declining rather than in an advance: I confess this may cause great thoughts of heart, when we consider that inestimable value, he

he whose the Church is hath put thereon, what glorious things are spoken of her in the word, especiallie with a respect to the latter dayes, and we have judged (I humblie think with a safe warrand) that this should be a solemne time of fulfilling these promises, which yet points at a more universal raising and enlargment of the Church of Christ; yea, that in so great a measure we have seen some begun performance thereof, and therefore should conclude the Lords work herein cannot halt, untill it be at the full height and at the perfect day; *shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth saith the Lord; shall I cause to bring forth and shut the womb, saith thy God. Is.* 66. 9. But let us go in to the Scripture and there enquire concerning this and we will find. 1. How the Church & the world in that interest of their joy and griefe as well as other interests are stated in a most direct opposition. *Joh.* 16. 20. *Verily*, saith Christ, *ye shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice*, It should not be expected these can be at rest together, since the trouble and suffering of the Church, it is a part of the worlds ease and quiet; what a solemne jubilee do's that cause to her adversaries, when they see before them the dead bodies of the witnesses of Christ. *Revelat.* 11. *ver.* 10. No sight more rejoycing to such, because these are they who torment them who dwell in the earth; but when once the truth casts off her sackcloath, and the witnesses get up to their feet; O what a terrour doth this cause! They are pain'd, yea, their eyes ready to consume in their eye holes with bitternes and anguish, that they have been at so sore work, and done so much against the Church, and yet cannot undoe her. 2. Should this be more strange now then it that time when the city of Shusan and whole seed

of the Jews were in perplexity, whilſt the King and Haman ſat down to feaſt, and rejoyce over ſuch a threatned ruine; for this ſeem'd to ſtrike at the root of the Church univerſal; and was not that a broad and dark cloud when this was write in the Lamentation of the Church, *Zion is a wildernes, and Jeruſalem a deſolation; yea could find no reſt, no comforter any where*, *Lam.* 1: *ver.* 16, 17. But if ſuch a providence ſeem ſtrange, that the Church now at this day ſhould be with ſo violent a ſpate, and univerſal a ſtorm run down when ſo great things are promiſed, let us conſider his way who by the greateſt downcaſting and ſtraits uſeth to bring about the moſt remarkable mercies; and do we not know the Devil appears with greateſt wrath, and raiſeth the foreſt ſtorms when he know's that his time is ſhort. 3. If we conſult the Scripture, we will find the adverſaries of the Church have an hour which is their hour and the power of darkneſs; for their ſunshine is indeed a black and dark time; and then is there a ſtrange aſtonishing concurrence of outward advantages on their ſide; for they are thus eſtabliſhed for judgment, and the wind muſt ſerve, and the tide make until that that work in their hand be fulfilled, they could never have been ſuch a a rod on the Church, if they were not appointed of the Lord for the ſame; yea, is it not obſervable, whilſt this their hour continues, there is then a power of darkneſs; ſuch a time when that hath an unuſual force, and would ſeem to carrie all before it, hath then a marvelous quick diſpatch in its ſpreading from one place to another, to make a dark night, where the Goſpel ſometimes hath had a bright day, yet we ſee how ſuch a ſtrange darkneſs hath but its hour as to the prevalence thereof, even a ſet time for the Churches trial: and it is ſuch an eclipſe, were it never

ver ſo univerſal, that muſt go over at its appointed period, & give place to light, before which the darknes can no longer ſtand, & then it ſhall be ſaid to her, who had almoſt abandoned her ſelfe to ſorrow, *Ariſe and ſhine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is riſen.* 4. Why ſhould we be amazed at this, where we may read ſo clearly ſomething of the Lords deſigne, even by ſo ſore and univerſal a ſtroak to appear in his glory, *Pſal.* 102: *v.* 16. and thus raiſe his Church with an unſpeakable advantage by ſuch a ſuppoſed ruine, the Scripture is in this very manifeſt, that when the Lord is about ſome great building, and hath ſome excellent piece of work to raiſe up, a great deale of rubbish and breaking downe uſeth to goe before; is it not thus alſo he makes the ſuffering graces of his Spirit in his people ſhine forth, that here the faith and patience of the Saints may be witneſſed; yea, ſhould we not know there is in every age a filling up of the ſufferings of Chriſt in his people, and a teſtimonie thus required to his truth, which the great witneſs himſelf did once ſeale and confirme with his blood, even he who before *Pontius Pilate* gave a good confeſſion, and through all ages even to the cloſe of time, there muſt not want ſome witneſſes to the ſame. It is knowne how ſome times of the Church are beyond others made remarkable for ſuffering; but it is no leſs clear, that in theſe times alſo the truth hath had the greateſt victorie, and herein a more ſpeciall clearing up of ſome truths which the world hath moſt ſtudied to darken; Thus we ſee ſome ages of the Church may have a larger part of this teſtimonie aſſigned; Yea, this remarke may not only be of ſome different lot and ſervice aſſigned to particular ages, but to particular Churches alſo. 5. If we enquire anent this, at the Scripture we will find

alſo ſome remarkable proportion that the turning again of the Churches captivitie hath to her former bondage, read *Iſai.* 49: *ver,* 19, 20. & 55: *ver.* 13, *Jer.*31: *ver.* 39. And you may ſee what an ample reſtauration is there, which as with a meaſuring line is made to anſwer in breadth and length to her former downcaſting; We find Zions rejoycing when her time of refreshment comes from the preſence of the Lord, muſt reach all her mourners, and be as univerſal as once the cauſe of lamentation was, *Iſai.* 66: *ver,* 10. Is it not ſuch an houre ſometime with the Church that a refreshing report is no where to be heard, but the tidings of the next day add's more griefe to the former dayes ſorrow; yet hath not ſuch a time quickly followed, wherein the Church might ſay. *The Lord hath encreaſed her greatneſs, and comforted her on every ſide*; And hath had a ſpring and reviving upon the return of the Sun as univerſal, as her decay and withering once was through the dead winter, *Iſai.* 51: *ver.* 3. And truly, whilſt we conſider the time in which we are now fallen, how the Church of Chriſt is every where low, and in a moſt languiſhing condition, Antichriſtianiſme now upon a formidable growth, as if there were an univerſal conſpiracie to returne again to Babylon, and if we will enquire hereanent at the Scripture as we ſee this ſad decay we may thence conclude a certaine delivery; Yea, that even by a day of vengeance the Lord can bring about the year of his redeemed: I humblie thinke we may with a ſafe Scripture warrand judge, that ſo univerſal a decay, ſuch a great overſpreading of darkneſs over the reformed Churches through the whole World may give us ground to believe ſuch a breaking up alſo of the Goſpel, and of the knowledge of the Lord, that ſhall be of as large extent, even to the

the filling of the earth therewith, as the waters cover the sea; It will not be a particular showre and sunshine of refreshing influences on some Church, It will not be the reviving of the work of God in these nations, I must think, will answer so broad a cloud, and so universal a vastation and lamentation through the whole Churches of Christ; But we may according to the Scripture look on this as a part of the last and most remarkable assault that the Church universal shall have from Antichrist, before that full stroake on the seat of the beast; Yea, that this is a very promising forerunner thereof, for when this partie seems now to get up, and begins to move war, we have sure ground to believe his further falling thereby, and that every new assault which that grand adversarie makes upon the Church, shall so farr put forward her interest and hasten his own ruine: Blessed are they who are helped in this dark hour to watch, and wait until the vision break up, for it will assuredly speak in the appointed time.

2. These short breathings of the Church, now under the New Testament, may seem also strange, that we see her sunshine so quickly darkned with clouds and followed with showres, that any lucide interval she enjoys wants not long a new storme, we see this verie clear what hath been the usual lot of the Church universal through all the times of the gospel, how sore tossed and overclouded, her rest of short continuance, and as to particular Churches, is it not a small period of time which useth to be betwixt one assault and another? So that they draw but a little their breath for some new trial: I confess this would be pusling, if such a piece of divine providence we should essey to unriddle without the Scripture; but we have the word neer us, where we may see the

fate and condition of the Church under the Gospel, the most remarkable steps in her way, these sharp assaults and short breathings she was to expect most clearly foretold and held forth; yea by consulting this blessed record, we will finde these. 1. That a more continued and fixed rest, then that which may be seen hitherto in the Churches condition could not well be reconciled with the Scripture, there was indeed a great breathing, a most remarkable cessation under Constantines reigne after a storme of some ages continuance; but O how short; and it is said *Rev.* 8. 1. There was silence in heaven for half an hour; I would here offer some remarks anent the way of the Lord in this. 1. That the cross and much affliction we finde have a more peculiar respect to the dispensation of the gospel then the times of the law; and this is speciallie suited thereto, to go through many tribulations which is verie consentaneous to a greater manifestation of grace under the New Testament, that greater and more frequent trialls for its exercise should also be let forth; 2. We finde such sore and usual assaults are not only suted to the most excellent condition of the Church in regard of spiritual priviledges, but doth often tryst the most excellent of the saints, read. Heb. 11: 32. This remark useth not to faile, how everie particular Church, besides these ordinary changes and tossings in her lot, hath also some more solemne remarkable trialls and some great assault beyond others, and accordingly hath some more singular breathings and sun-blinks suited thereto. 4. We cannot finde any such calme and breathing, which hath not been verie short if we turn back and trace the historie of the Church in former times, but the clouds have returned quickly after the raine; yea, we may observe how the most

moſt excellent Princes and Magiſtrats under whom the Church hath had ſome ſweet repoſe have been oft in a verie ſhort time taken away, and have but lived a few years. 2. If we wonder at ſuch a piece of the Lords way, why his Church is thus toſſed, doth not the Scripture ſhew what need she hath to be emptied from veſſel to veſſel, a long calme being no leſs her hazard than a sharp ſtorme, and more cauſe oft to watch over her outward reſt, then weep over her trouble and toſſings: Oh how oft hath the Church loſt more by a few years peace then a long continued war; yea the neceſſitie of a sharp winter for her recoverie hath been ſo diſcernable ere it came, that if it were not for the downbearing of truth, and shaking of the faith of the ſaints, the continuance thereof might be almoſt wished as her advantage, let be to be quietly ſubmitted unto. 3. Doth not the Scripture alſo witneſs that continued laſting quarrel, vvhich is betwixt the world and the Church, and is perpetuat from generation to generation, that time cannot wear out, ſo that if she had not ſo great a partie for her, and an immediat ſupport from heaven, we might find more cauſe to wonder she yet breaths, then to ask why her breathings are ſo short when there is ſo great a power againſt her? O if the Church had not this to anſwer all the meſſengers of the nations anent her ſecuritie, *That the Lord hath founded Zion*, ſure that long breathing deſigne for ſo many ages should at laſt have taken place, even to the razing of her foundation. 4. It is clear the moſt ſingular fellowship, and free acceſſe thereinto, with Jeſus Chriſt on the earth, is by the croſs, and in that way witneſſed, that it muſt be ſaid, if ſuch afflicting times did not oft return upon his people there would be a shut door betwixt the Church, and a large part of the

Bible

Bible, both as to its meaning, and as to its full breasts of consolation, are there not most sweet refreshing truths there, with which the godly cannot reach so neer, & feeling a converse with in an outward calme as under some sharpest wrestlings: O what an excellent commentar hath a suffering time given upon these, beyond all that ever was written, on such a truth of the Scripture, *Persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed, as sorrowful, yet alwayes rejoycing*, and thus, we see how in our stumbling at such a providence we are not knowing the Scripture, and mistakes our own mercie.
5. Whilst we see these short intervals which have so usually been under the New Testament, betwixt one trial of the Church and another, and the cause thereof so clear from the word; let us also consider what warrand there is yet to expect before the end a more solemne and remarkable time of the Churches enlargement, that not only shall be verie universal in its extent; but a more lasting and continued rest from the violence of the world then hath formerly been, which I humblie judge on clear Scripture grounds we are to believe upon the coming of that full stroak on Babilon, and these solemne espousals of the Jewish Church to Christ which seems to be the most remarkable period, of that time appointed for the Churches reigne; and though this will not want some sharp trials, and a mixture of outward trouble, yet, we find no ground from the Scripture after the discussing of Antichrist and the throwing down of the Turkish empire, for any remarkable interruption and overclouding, or that the Church shall have any great assault until that finall gathering of the world and her forces together to the last battel of the Lamb.

3. Is

3. Is not this a ſtrange remark likewyſe, which is ſo uſual a complaint through the Church, that with a greater increaſe of light and knowledge, there is ſeen a viſible wearing out of life and power, and now in theſe more knowing times, there ſhould be ſo much ground to ſay, tendernes and the ſerious exerciſe of godlineſs is more worne out, and in a further decay, then in the times of greater ignorance: let us but look through the reformed Churches at this day and then turne home to our ſelves, and we will find this remark too ſadly verifyed; how after a great increaſe of knowledge, the truths of God in ſuch a meaſure cleared beyond former ages, it may be ſaid, Oh whether is the life and power of godlineſs gone, and that fervour which once ſo convincingly appeared in following the Lord? Wee know there is a ſweet agreement betwixt the Chriſtians light and life, which hath a mutual ſubſerviency to each other, and yet to ſee ſo ſad a jarr this day, and ſo little proportion, the one hath to the other, may put us with aſtonishment to a ſerious inquiry thereanent; but the ſcripture is clear and makes it plain, if we will conſider. 1. That there is a time of a peoples eſpouſalls to the Lord, and then the kindnes of their youth and a remarkable time of love is ſeen. *Ier.* 21.2. When their affection will be aloft after him; yea, ſuch a ſolemne period of the Churches condition may be ſeen when it hath not reached that light and knowledge, as after; but doe we not alſo find how rare it is for a people, to hold up at that rate & meaſure in their life and love, which at ſuch times hath appeared, whatever advance there may be as to light; thence we find the Churches holding up with the name and profeſſion of godlineſs *Rev.* 3.2. when very ſore ſpent in her life; yea, this decay oft upon ſuch an unſenſible

ſible growth that it will be hard to get ſuch convinced thereof and remember whence they are fallen. 2. If we will ask at the ſcripture, it will alſo shew that judicial tendency which light not improven hath to a further hardening; how under the goſpel men may be made deaf with hearing, for judgment am I come in the world, ſayth Chriſt. *Joh.* 9. 39. which hath that effect, that theſe who ſee should be made blind; light is ſurely one of the greateſt talents of the Church, and brings with it either a remarkable gain, or loſe; nothing ſo dreadful as this when it is abuſed; O at what a rate doth it run down, and ſtupifie the conſcience! that thus men are not only more deadned, but becomes the more dead and blind that they were once enlightned. 3. May we not thence know how this is one of the Devils greateſt engines he makes uſe of to turne mens light againſt their life and tenderneſs, even to incite them from that excellent diſcovery of the grace of God unto wantenneſs. *Jud.* 4. and thus eſſay an agreement betwixt light and darkneſs; O what a dreadful poyſon muſt that be! which can imbitter ſo excellent a ſtreame, and turn ſo choyſe and quickening a mean of our ſpiritual life to be deſtructive thereto: that we ſee knowledge, whoſe true and native tendency is to humble and abaſe, being thus impoyſoned do's work the contrare effect, even to ſwell men and puff them up; to oppoſe theſe gifts againſt the Church which are given of the Lord for its edification, and for defence of the goſpel; thus we find it clear, when light hath made a further advance in the Church, the Devil is there at work to deſtroy love, by many bitter contentious debates, where the intereſt may be oft ſeen more perſonal, to wit their reput and credite, then the intereſt of God and his truth: I am farr from any intended reflection

on

on that grave and neceſſary duty of appearing in defence of the truth, and mens ſtating themſelves in oppoſition to theſe who are its adverſaries, a quarrel wherein they ſhould know neither friend nor brother for this is to ſtand in the breach when it is aſſaulted, to contend for the faith; O bleſſed contention where ſuch with that excellent man Melanchton can ſay *Non quæro gloriam propriam, ſed veritatem.* 4. Though this is a very ſad and threatning ſymptome that night is coming on a Church where the light ſhines, but the heat and warming influence thereof is gone; yet here is a riddle, we find the Scripture do's wonderfully unfold, how the Lord makes things bring forth contrare effects, and cauſe a remarkable conſumption, that ſeems to reach the Church in her inward & vital parts, reſolve in an overflowing with righteouſneſs *Iſ.* 10. v. 22. yea, thus lets us ſee a people ſo far ſpent in life and ſpiritualitie, that the things which remain are ready to dye, whilſt even there, the Lord is purſuing their recoverie: It is herein he makes his grace marvelous to tryſt his peoples raiſing with ſo low a ſtep of their condition, and cauſe his Church when brought to a ſmall remnant take root downward, and bring forth fruit upward. *Iſ.* 37. 31. It would ſeem a ſtrange connection, but not ſtrange to the grace of God. *Pſ.* 102. that the time of his favouring Zion, even that ſet time ſhould finde her in a heap of ſtones and rubbiſh; yea, that a reviving and the breaking up of her day begins there with the weeping of her friends over her ruins: I ſhall further adde, with reſpect to the preſent time, we may believe on very ſure grounds that godlineſs and the power thereof will yet break up in the world, though it were at the loweſt ebb, yea, as at its laſt breathing; that little ſpunke now under aſhes muſt aſſu-

redly revive and blow up to a flame; yea, send forth its heat to warme the nations; for on solid grounds we may thus reason, if such a death-like decay had a respect only to some particular Church, and if this withering abatement, and languishing of the exercise of grace were confined but to a corner, it might be a sad presage that their sun, when so far declined and gone downe were neer to the setting; but since this seems to be a consumption over the whole earth, a matter of lamentation and a spreading complaint, through the whole reformed Church, we may look on it as a very promising ground of confidence and hope of a recoverie; for if that be sure the Church universal cannot die under such a disease, it is also sure this sickues is not unto death, yea so remarkable an opposition to the power of godlinesas is this day through the world, we may judge a verie refreshing presage of some more universal upbreaking of the same, wherein God will be seen by some blessed surprisal in a verie immediat way; for there is hope of this tree, which in a special way he had himself planted, that it shall grow though now cut downe, by the sent of waters, even by the river the streams whereof makes glade the citie of God; which can in old age cause her to bring forth fruit: O what life is there in the Church of Christ when it seems to be buried! for she is in the root that cannot dry up, & herein must his promise & his peoples praise meet, that her drye bones shall flowrish as a green herb, there can be now no less appearance of this then at that time when the Lord turned again the captivity of his people, which was so little expected. *Ps.* 126. that they knew not whether it was a dream or real: It may indeed be a very humbling discovery, that we must say, our ruine is of our selves; yet must it not ruine our hope

hope, since in these great things which the Lord hath done for the Church, the greatness of his power hath not been more clearly witnessed, then the freedome & soveraignity of his grace, that men may see; this is the Lords doing, & should be marvellous in their eyes.

4. May it not seem strange, and be matter of astonishment, that the great men of the earth, and such who sit in the place of judgment are usually found to be greatest adversaries to the Church; yea, it is too well known that magistracy (so excellent an ordinance of God) hath been so far perverted that even under the Christian Magistrate the Church of Christ hath suffered more since first breaking up then from any other airth, this indeed may seem marvelous; I do not deny there have been great men in the world, who have no less outshined others in fervour and zeal for the truth, then in their place and quality; But oh we may say an age brings forth few such, and that which Salvian says of his time, hath been a true remark in most ages of the world, and too frequently seen, that the contempt upon religion by these who were in greatest power had this effect, *Ut mali cogantur esse, ne viles habeantur*: I confess this may cause wonder, if we consider for what end the great Lawgiver hath designed that ordinance, how men should so farr counteract his intereſt, from whom they derive their power, & for being subservient thereto have received it: sure the doctrine of the Church of Christ can give no groud of quarrel; & its strange these should expect from others homage & subjection who turns the seat of judgment to be a grievous yoke & denies their subjection so avowedly to the great judge: O how sad is it that none are oft such a terrour to the godly, such a support to evil doers, as Magistrats, & the great men of the world so usually found to be the greatest

examples of wickedneſs; this should indeed be matter of lamentation, yea, that theſe are oft times advanced, who have nothing to commend them but ſome advance beyond others in a higher meaſure of impietie: but we muſt goe to the Scripture and there enquire which will shew. 1. That it is not ſtrange though iniquitie have a throne under whoſe shadow miſchief may not only shelter but come that length to be fram'd into a law. *Pſ.* 94:20. yea, it muſt not be ſtrange, that the adverſaries of the truth be among the chief of the time; which complaint we find *Lam.* 1. 5. The world is not yet cured of that madneſs of which the Prophet ſpeaks with amazment *Pſ.* 2. 1. why the Kings and rulers of the earth should attempt a vain thing to ruine the Church, and make his decree void, who by his word created the world, we may ſee it is not of late the ſervants of Chriſt have been conveened before rulers in defence of the truth, and have ſuffered by the law, where the crime was, their adherence to the expreſs command of the great law-giver. Luk. 21. 12. It is alſo clear the Kings of the earth for many ages have amidſt all their private differences with one conſent aggreed to make war with the lamb, and give their ſtrength for upholding Antichriſt, yet is this nothing elſe, but what the Scripture hath foretold. Rev. 17. It was written of an excellent man in the dayes of Phocas that after ſome humble expoſtulating with the Lord, why he ſet up ſo vile a wretch in the higheſt place of power, that he had this returne *quia non inveni pejorem*: Herein is the way of the Lord unſpotted, how ſad ſo ever it be in it ſelf, that theſe who should execute judgment for the oppreſſed are in his holy diſpleaſure made the executioners of his judgments on men, and shew's themſelves the greateſt oppreſſours. 2. If this be ſtrange

to

to us, do's not the Scripture prevent our ſtumbling by a moſt ſweet and choiſe antidote, that when we ſee the oppreſſion of the poor, and ſuch a wrathfull aſpect rulers uſuallie have on the Church of God, we ſhould not marvell or be much moved thereat, even when we ſee theſe whom death hath pluckt away, and with ſhame rolled in the grave, ſtill returne with the ſame reſemblance in their ſucceſſors, and pietie in all ages run down by power, for it is written, that he who is higher then the higheſt doth regard the ſame *Eccl.* 5. 8. O how far are they below God, yea, infinitly below him who are higheſt among men, hath not their violence and oppreſſion of the Church him for a witneſs, who... they muſt alſo have for a judge? And the further they ſeem raiſed above humane reach, they ly more neer to ſome immediat ſtroak of a divine hand; that when there is no reprover on earth, none there to give their cruelty againſt the Church a check, he ſits in heaven who laughs them to ſcorne, which they ſhall finde to be ſad earneſt, when he ſpeaks to them in his wrath and vexes them in his ſore diſpleaſure. 3. Do's not the Scripture witneſs the Lords bleſſed deſigne in this to make his Church thrive another way when she is deſtitute of the help and countenance of civill authoritie, and thus lead her in to him, who hath the key of David, that opens and none can ſhut, unto him who is a known refuge for the oppreſſed; it is here he declares himſelf to be God, and the greatneſs of his power who can keep her alive, and preſerve his intereſt in a deſtroying flame, and under a cruel oppreſſing Magiſtrate, yea, thus cauſe her flowriſh in his dayes, and have peace in his reigne, even under the grievous reigne of her adverſaries: doe we not likewiſe find *Neh.* 9. 36. The Churches diſtreſs there and oppreſſion from her ru-

lers makes them resolve in a more neer ty and conjunction with God, which is seen in the last verse, *And because of this we make a sure covenant, &c.* O blessed violence and oppression! that lands here, where the storme drives to such an anker as a further cleaving to the Lord, and surrender of themselves to him. 4. As the Scripture prevents mens stumbling at this ordinarie suffering of the Church under Magistracie, it do's also witness the Lords contending verie remarkablie against these on such an account, and clearly sheweth, that no humane greatnes can secure from him who cuts off the spirit of Princes, and is terrible to the Kings of the earth; consider *Ps.* 2. 9. and 93. 4. It is here we may read the cause of the changes of Kingdomes and States that are so frequent in the world, whatever influence personal interests seem to have, there is a holy revenging God, and his arme made bare therein upon the quarrel of his Church, that he may recompense tribulation to these who have troubled her; none needs wonder that flowrishing States are broken in such a quarrel, to see the supreme head of the Church, (that in all things he may have the preheminence) wound the head over many countreys, and rule the nations with an iron rod, yea, turn great men out of their grandour and authoritie, and throw them down, for the cause is obvious, they keep no bounds and marches with the Kingdome of Jesus Christ, but will be over and invade his interest, untill he who must reigne, and have all dominion and power subjected to him carrie that warre back upon themselves, and stand up against such evill neighbours, for his own right, for which he will strike thorough Kings in the day of his wrath, yea pursue the race & seed of such oppressours, the father & the children, as a standing quarrel from generation

to

to generation. 5. It is ſure corrupt Magiſtracy is one of the great plagues of God on the world; wherein his unſpotted righteouſnes & the provoking cauſe from men, may be ſeen in the Scripture, that when ſuch will throw off his yoke, and quarrel with his authoritie in ſubjection to which their libertie lyes, they ſhould have one more grievous and unſufferable wreathed on them, and be delivered up to the hands of ſuch cruell exactors; I muſt here ſay the Lord do's viſibly contend by ſuch a ſtroake with that exceſſive flatterie and reſpect the nations gives their rulers, that blind obedience they give contrary to the expreſs will of the Law-giver, by a willing following of the commandment, and thus writes that ſin on their judgment, that the hand of men ſhould be heavie and ſore on their own intereſts who can ſo eaſily comply with their oppreſſion of the Church and invading the intereſts of God: but here is no intended reflection on that divine ordinance of Magiſtracie, whereon his image is ſo viſibly impreſſed, though in all ages there hath been ſad cauſe to bewaile the abuſe of ſo great a truſt and power, and to ſee it ſo deſtructive to the end for which it is deſigned.

3. This alſo ſeems ſtrange and is a very shaking thing, to ſee ſome of greateſt repute and eminency in the Church, who have been ſingularly uſeful to engage others in the way of the Lord change their principles with the time, and turne at laſt in oppoſition thereto, yea make it their work to caſt down what once with great zeal they ſeemed to build; I confeſs this may give ſad ground of ſtumbling, and nothing Atheiſme takes more advantage of to queſtion the truth of all Religion, if there be any thing further, than a humane intereſt in it, when mens light in the matters of God, and the doctrine of Miniſters

are found so cross to themselves with the changes of the time: blessed are they who are not offended at Christ because of this; but let us consult the Scripture and then instead of being shaken or brangled we will find this such a special confirmation of the truth, that if it were not thus men might rather question the same; for, 1. Such a shaking trial is clearly foretold from crosse tides of doctrine, that should be within the Church. *Eph.* 4. 14. yea, a warning given of these who handles the word deceitfully. 2 *Cor.* 4. v. 2. by accommodating it to their privat interest and designe & a corrupt application thereof; for when men do once establish the conclusion before the premisses for complyance with a sinful course, they are then at work to wrest the Scripture by misapplying it. 2 *Pet.* 3. which is indeed to oppose the truth against it selfe, and sute it to their byasse, that they may salve such a visible opposition betwixt them and themselves in their way and practice; and thus whatever fair shew they make in the flesh, they expose the word and their parts and abilities in handling of it to sale (O an accursed sale and merchandize) Now if this seem strange and be stumbling, that amongst the dispensers of the mysteries of God, and of greatest repute in the Church, such should be found, read 2. *Cor.* 2. 17. And yow will there see the cause why many corrupts the word, because they are not in sinceritie and as in the sight of God therein, which is absolutely required to qualify a faithful Minister of Christ: Oh! The want of that candor and uprightnes of heart is a worme which lyes hid at the root of all their other parts, and as a dead corrupting fly in so excellent a box of oyntment; thus we may see this is so far from being a cause of stumbling at the truth, that it do's most convincingly fullfil and verifie

verifie the same. 2. When we have so sad a discovery in the Church have we not this antidote likewise from the Scripture, not to be shaken or moved thereat. *Heb.* 13. 9. But that we studie to know & be perswaded of the truth that may quiet and support the soul, though we should be left alone in following duty, the testimony of God is sure and immovable, and he is true, though all men should be liars, we must have the persons of none in admiration, which hath so usual a tendency to bribe the judgment and betray the truth; but though an Apostle or an Angel from heaven should come to oppose the Scripture of God we ought in so far say, let him be accursed. 3. Here also is the holy counsel and designe of the Lord made known that these who are approven may be made manifest, and such have an opportunity to discover themselves, who turne aside to crooked paths, and tread in the dark to the prejudice of the truth. *Ps.* 125. 5. They may dig very deep to hide their opposition to God, not only from others, but even from themselves; but providence herein hath a deeper reach & ensnares them in the work of their owne hands; yea, doth thus bring forth with the workers of iniquity, and as his greatest adversaries, who wound and betray his interest under that mask, and disguise of a friend; this is indeed a preventing mercy to the Church whose hurt and hazard hath been more from these who walk under a cover then any other party; and here is the counsel of the Lord shew'd, that when a piercing trial comes which will go thorow the soul like a sword, the thoughts of many hearts may be then discovered, there is a falling in of many with the Church under a calme, who must fall off with a storme, it is strange to think how small the first en-

try of a further declining will be when once there is a tendency &byaſs that way, how hard is it to joyn in a familiar correſpondence with the adverſaries of the truth without joyning in ſome meaſure with their way; yea, it is ſeen theſe uſually are more enſnared, then the adverſe party by any ſuch tampering are bettered; It is a ſad truth which is ſaid of Ephraim, ſtrangers devoured his ſtrength, yet he knew it not. *Hoſ.* 7. 8. It is no wonder when men come the length of detaining the truth in unrighteouſneſs, and withſtand the giving of a teſtimony thereto when called, that the nixt ſtep be, ſome appearance againſt it. 4. Is it not clear from the Scripture that the righteous God, doth thus rain ſnares on men? yea, this is one of the woes the world is under becauſe of offences; for the fall and turning aſide of ſuch is a ſad ſtroak on others, whilſt they uſe not to fall alone, when theſe become a ſtumbling block, whoſe lips ſhould preſerve knowledge, whom the people are to conſult concerning the law, and thus be the greateſt cauſe of offence themſelves whoſe work is to ſtrengthen, and confirme others; O what a ſore plague is this on a poor Church, when it is low, to break her further, and make her diſtemper grow; we may truly ſay it is more threatning then ſword, famine or peſtilence againſt a nation; It is a ſtrange ground which is given of the departure of theſe from the faith who were once in repute of the Church, yea, of the breaking up of Antichriſt in the world 2. *Theſ.* 2, 12. that it was to punish them who believed not the truth, and would not embrace the ſame; O it is a ſad and dreadful time to live in, where ſuch offences abound! for it clearly ſhews a judicially plaguing time, upon the Church and ſome great abuſe of the Goſpel which hath gone before.

5. When

5. When this seems strange to us, should we not learn to adore & justify him, who thus stains the pride of all flesh & will silence the confidence or boasting of instruments, that the Chruch may know where her strength ly's; this is a remarke though sad which seldome fails, that the greatest enduements & gifts, where men are swell'd & lift up therewith have a more easie & native byasse against the truth then for it, & threatnes the Churches hazard more than any advantage the exercise of these gifts can promise; & the greater repute men walk under, where humility keeps not low, layes them the more neer some humbling stroak to bring them low, ere they go off the stage, that no flesh may glory in his presence, 1 *Cor.* 1: *v.* 26. We must say the greatest *Hero'es* in the Church of Christ, who have shined, even to their setting most brightly, have been also the most humble. 6. As it is clear there is no jarr betwixt the Scripture and this, but it is so great a confirmation thereof, that should further strengthen and establish us in the way of the Lord, for the falling off of such from the truth is a trial most expresly foretold, & a convincing witnes to the truth of the Scripture; so this also must be granted that there are Ministers and watchmen in the Church of Christ, in all ages found faithful to their Masters intereſt, who have been not only helped to confess the truth, & deliver the counsel of God to the World, but to witness their adherence to and perswasion of it by suffering: O can the World debate this that such in the worst of times are found to drive a treaty of reconciliation betwixt Christ and sinners, who are in earnest, and have a weight of that work on them without respect to outward encouragement; O happy Servants of so great a Master, who considers that they shine with borrowed light and derives all from him whether as to grace or gifts, that

that therein they may returne to him again, by a faithful improvement of their talent, who reckons they cannot be low where he is exalted, they cannot lose where the gain is his, but in this doth rejoice to see him increase and his Kingdom on an advance, though they decrease and be darkened with the brightness of his rising.

6. I know this is an astonishing thing, which many pretends a cause for stumbling, to see how some have walked, and at what a rate under a profession of godliness, and for so long a time have had the appearance of being serious and tender, yea, have thus personated the walk of a Christian, whom an after-discovery hath proved not in some particular only, but in the main intereſt of religion to be without reality and truth; this may indeed seem strange and be cause of wonder that men having the use of reason should be at so sore a toil, to hold up a forme of godliness and the external exercise of Christian duties only for a forme, who might with an other kinde of facilitie & unspeakable pleasure have reached both the shadow and the substance by being serious, and it is sure, if such get not the impression of a Deity razed out of the soul (which is impossible) there must be some time terrour in their approach to God, though not in any secret retirements, (for this should be a piece of their torment to come so neer their conscience, & be alone with it, left it flee in their face) yet with others, when such a witness they have within, that it is their deliberat work to deceive at once, the great God, their generation, and their own soul, but oh this is not more strange then true, yea, many such pretenders are, and will be within the pale of the visible Church, and is there not a divine hand marvelously oft seen in renting that vail and bringing these forth to the light,

in

in such a way as may witness this is from the Lord; now there is no ground of challenge or reflection here on his holy and unspotted way or the reality of godliness, it we will but seriously enquire at the Scripture where we have this. 1. expressly foretold, that men should have a forme of godliness and deny the power thereof. 1. *Tim.* 3: 5. profess to know God, being abominable disobedient, and unto every good work reprobat. *Tit.* 1: *last. ver.* Yea, will come in sheeps clothing yet be ravenous wolves, have not some of the Churches sharpest trialls been in such a way ushered in, even under a false shew, and have not the most cruel persecuters entered the stage as friends? You know how the man of sin did first step in, was he not thus masked? & is not the Scripture clear, that to seek a Church free of such a mixture out of heaven, is to seek that which we will never finde, for it is there only, no unclean thing can enter. 2. Do's not this blessed record of the scripture shew with what singular art and advantage such may act that part and with Jehu enquire, if the mans heart be right whilst his own is most false, what a strange confidence will these have who glories in apperance and not in heart? Will they not cry unto God and make mention of him but not in truth. *Is.* 48. Yea, should we wonder, though such be found who can maske their privat intereſt with such an apperance, even whilst they seek a rule for their religion out of Matchiavel, but not out of the Bible. 3. If the length that these may come seem strange, will you consult the Scripture which goes as great a length in its discoverie and you will know how deep it works, sometimes not at an ordinary rate but they will invite the world to see their zeal for God, who dare not endure the view of their own conscience, therein yow may finde an Apostle and one of the

twelve

twelve and yet a Devil, to witneſs this should be no reflection on the Church of Chriſt, though an eminent Miniſter thereof be found rotten and unſound who hath made a great ſhew in the flesh. 4. Do's the Scripture allow, or flatter any in ſuch a way? you cannot there have one line for its encouragement; but whilſt humane law do's not reach this, divine Law moſt ſeverely threatnes, *Job* 8: *v.* 13.&c. *Math.* 7: *ver.* 15 &c. And there you may ſee it in its own colour, how horrid a thing it is which the more neer it do's approach Religion, (that is ſo excellent and lovely in itſelf) this falſe shew thereof is the more hateful and loathſome; Yea, even theſe who comply's with it in themſelves are made to loath it in others, which is in the higheſt meaſure a falshood and lye, becauſe a lying to the God of truth. 5. You cannot challenge the Church and followers of Ieſus Chriſt, that by them any ſuch thing is owned or juſtified, but it may be ſeen, what an offence and wound ſuch a diſcoverie will prove, to theſe; It is indeed a cauſe of griefe, but no cauſe of reflection on the truth of God, for in ſo far this is verified, they went out from us, becauſe they were not of us, 1 *Joh.* 2: *v.* 29. 6. Is not that horrid and black roll mention'd by the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 2: *ver.* 3, claſpt as it were betwixt theſe two, a forme of godlineſs, but denying the power thereof: It is not ſtrange when Religion is attended with much power in a place, that hypocriſie is found there alſo; but it is clear what remarkable diſcoveries have been made thereof, that ſeldome ſuch who have moſt induſtriouſly ſtudied that accurſed art have gone to the grave under this cover, though I deny not but ſome may. I muſt further adde that ſome ſpecial incitement and concurrence of the devill is here oft very manifeſt and his power as remarkably put forth

forth as in any luſt of the flesh to put ſome foreward on ſuch a deſigne; yea, even may be ſubſervient to them in the exerciſe of common gifts, that may deceive for the time very diſcerning Chriſtians; I cannot queſtion the truth of this, having ground to inſtance ſuch, who have been in an expreſſe covenant with Satan, and have after acknowledged his help and aſſiſtance, for their dexterous managing ſo dreadful a deſigne; if yow think this ſtrange, yow would conſider that the devil himſelf is transformed to an Angel of light, but it is well, the groſſeſt defilement of men can no wayes ſtain Religion and the way of the Lord which is pure and undefiled.

7. Theſe ſad jarrs and diviſions which are ſo frequent in the Church of Chriſt may ſeem very ſtrange, and be cauſe of ſtumbling and offence to many, that whilſt the World is at ſuch an agreement, and of one minde to oppoſe the truth, theſe are oft found at warr, moſt bitterly contending amongſt themſelves, even theſe who should ſtand in the breach for the truth & in defence of the Goſpel, the fellow ſervants at ſtrife & ſmiting one another when they should be ſtriving together about their Maſters work; I confeſs this is ſad, and is a rock whereon many have ſplit, of which they have made that uſe to a further heightening of their prejudice againſt the truth; Yea, it is ſtrange that this deſtroying plague doth ſo obſervably attend any peace, or calme, that the Church hath, in her outward condition; but there is no cauſe for ſuch ſtumbling if we will allow it ſome ſerious thoughts, it may rather help to fix and eſtabliſh us in the way of the Lord, and inſtead of being a poiſone, may be an effectual antidote againſt the ſame, I mean the Atheiſme of the time which pretends ſo great an advantage

tage from this, for the Scripture is clear. 1. Though it is a ſore ſtroake on the Church, and the moſt ſad departure of God from a People which we have upon divine record, we finde uſually tryſt them in ſuch a torne and divided caſe, yea, though in all the records of after times, this may be traced in the breaking up of a judgment as a very immediat forerunner thereof, yet, have we no warrand to expect the Church militant ſhall be in that condition in which there ſhall be no ſuch diſcord and breach, no, that is heaven, and it is there only perfect peace and concord will be found; read, 1 *Cor.* 1: *ver.* 10. *Rom.* 15: *ver.* 5. and what an early trial was this to the Church which did occaſion that grave and ſolemne meeting of the Apoſtles and Elders, *Acts* 15. to let us ſee, how the Lord can ſerve himſelf of the greateſt evil for the advantage of his truth. 2. There is no cauſe of challenge here or reflecting on the truth, whatever be on theſe who profeſs it, ſince the Scripture ſhews we know but in part and Propheſie in part, and ſuch a prevailing mixture of corruption, that ſome will preach Chriſt out of ſtrife and contention not ſincerely, *Phil.* 1: *ver.* 15. Yea, whilſt there are ſuch different ſyzes amongſt the Saints, that theſe who eat not, are ready to judge them who eat, and theſe who eat, are ready to deſpiſe him who eateth not. 3. If we conſult the Scripture, we will finde that peace and concord within the Church which is ſo excellent in it ſelf and deſirable muſt be ſeverely qualified with a reſpect to holineſs. *Hebr.* 12: *ver.* 14. for elſe ſuch an agreement would not be the true peace of the Church, but her plague; and is not that wiſdome which is from above firſt pure and then peaceable? It is ſure, they are its beſt friends who have leaſt latitude to take or give in the intereſt

of

of truth ; but it is oft found, how ſuch indirect tamperings for peace, have in the judgment of the Lord cauſed a further breach ; there is no true jarr betwixt the zeal of God, and an ardent deſire and endeavour for peace, but what our corruption cauſeth ; O this is a bleſt peace maker, who can goe the furtheſt length to yeeld in his own things, whether credite or private intereſt, yea, overlook the moſt sharp perſonal reflections to promote that excellent deſigne ; but hath nothing to yeeld or quite upon his Maſters intereſt, and can reſiſt whoſoever they be that would prejudge this, even to their face ; have we not that Heroick practice of the Apoſtle. *Gal.* 2. 5. upon divine record to this day, *to whom we gave place, no not for an hour, that the truth of the goſpel might continue with you :* Is not that alſo a ſpecial remark that theſe who cauſe diviſion in the Church, & were therefore to be noted *Rom.* 16. 17. it was theſe, who did oppoſe the doctrine of the Church, for it is mens falling off from the truth, which is indeed the cauſe of a ſchiſme and rent, but not their adherence to it, though for this they ſhould be men of contention, and look't on as ſignes and wonders in the time. 4. Whatever advantage ſome may take to challenge the way of the Lord, from theſe breaches, I am ſure they cannot deny, there is a fellowship and concord in the Church of Chriſt beyond any in the world, there is a communion of the ſaints, even here, with one heart and minde, yea, in ſuch a meaſure as may ſhew the world, this is a bond that exceeds the moſt neer and ſtrait tyes of naturall relations. *Eph.* 4. *ver.* 3. 16. and truly every jarr and difference amongſt the followers of Chriſt, makes not a breach.

8. I know that this will ſeem ſtrange and aſtoniſhing in the way of the Lord, that when the Church

from her adversaries without is oppressed and brought low, his hand in a very immediat way also is so heavie, yea, seems more sore upon his people, then the hand of men, and do's even by some sad strokes in their privat interests, and upon their persons appear more remarkably against them, then against any others; this may occasion great thoughts of heart, when we consider that tendernes which the Lord doth witness towards his people, that he stirs not up all his wrath, nor will lay upon them above that they can bear, but stayes his rough wind in the day of the east wind, and hath promised to be a sanctuarie, and hiding place when they are scattered by men: *Ezek.* 11. 16. and with another partie the Church might debate, yea, hold her own, with her greatest adversaries; But oh! it is time to flee and there can be no standing, where the Almightie pursues, there is then true cause of fear and terrour when he becomes his peoples partie; But let us consult the Scripture that great interpreter of providence, and of everie step of the way and procedure of the Lord with his Church, and it will let us see. 1. That it is no strange case, or untroden path, but we may find the Prophet *Ier.* 17. 17. at such a grievous cry, *be not a terrour to me, thou art my hope in the evill day*, and had not the Church the same cause of complaint *Ier.* 30. 14. 16. *that the Lord seem'd to wound her with the wound of an enemie and the stroke of a cruel one*; It was the appearance of this, that was a very sad addition to her triall beyond any other thing *Is.* 63. 10. that they found the Lord turn'd to be their enemie, and in an immediat way seem to fight against them. 2. Do's not the Scripture shew that the rod may have a dreadfull appearance, and the way of the Lord by some strange and singular circumstances in dealing with his people may be mater of amazment, when

when he designes a further increase of their grace, yea, their trial more then their punishment; this is indeed one of the deeps of providence, which we have discovered *Job* 1. 2. Chapters, how by a divine permission Satan may verie effectuallie concurre in a stroke on the Church, or some particular Christian, and thus cause a strange concurrence of imbittering things, that in such a case the hand of the Lord would seem verie terrible, whilst he only mindes his peoples trial; and it is clear that the fierie trial mentioned by the Apostle 1 *Pet.* 4: 12. may have such strange, and singular circumstances, that the godly will be at a question if such did ever befal others, and yet you see it there held forth more as a ground of joy then of fear; O how deep in afflicting times of the Church may the plot and contrivance of the devil be! which in the holy counsell of the Lord is oft forced to run against its own byasse, and to bring forth the verie contraire effect. 3. If we understand the Scripture, we may there know, how the trial of the Church hath its appointed bounds and measure, yea, by some remarkable steps will grow that length, and have such an advance until it surround them on all hands. *Lam.* 2. 22. *Thou hast called my terrours round about, as in a solemne day*; yet, when it is so, we finde it is not without cause, but may be needfull for the Church and particular Christians to be in heavinesse through manifold temptations. 1 *Pet.* 1. 6. and truly in such an unusual tryst and varietie of straits, the tendence thereof is oft seen for as manifold use and advantage, as the many afflicting ingredients in that trial have been remarkable. 4. Wee may also see from the Scripture what an usual resemblance there is betwixt the publick lot of the Church in suffering times, and the privat case of the saints, how under some sad trial and departure

of the Lord from his people, his dispensations are many wayes corrective and judicial, that doth then reach them in all their personal interests; there is a backsliding time, and a day when judgment particularly points at the green tree which useth not to be a comforting time, that then Satan is more observably let loose to afflict, and few will miss some touch of his hand, read *Lam.* 1. 2. where you find *the sword abroad devouring*, a time of publick judgment, and then it was *at home also as death*, and in the 16. v. under such sore afflicting stroks there is one further held forth, that was most imbittering of all to the godly in that time, that *the comforter who should relieve their soul was farr of*; It is clear nothing do's more endear a mercie and make it sweet then the Lords immediat appearance therein; and nothing do's more imbitter the rod, which put David to that cry *Psl.* 39. *remove that strok from me, I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.* 5. Upon a serious inquirie anent this strange thing, may we not understand the meaning thereof by the Scripture, why in some trials the Lord do's thus shew himself his peoples partie, and his hand more heavie on them then on others, that there is some provoking cause whereat these providences clearly point; when the godly are pursuing their ease and satisfaction under the rod, more then to answer its designe, when they are ready to take mortification and a humble stouping under trouble for a couching underneath their burden, it is not then strange though that sad wo, *Amos* 6. *v.*6. do so farr reach them as their personal ease makes them forget the affliction of Joseph: for thus the righteous God sutes their stroke to the sin, & keeps such a proportion that a light burden of the care of the Church should make their care otherwayes abound, and in their own things presse them with much trouble, when

when theſe goe betwixt them and the intereſt of Chriſt, there is a very unſeen cauſe oft why many of the ſaints may be ſick and ſome falling aſleep, yea, this truth muſt be likewiſe verifyed, there is a ſaving of things by which we put them in further hazard, and a ſecuring thereof by a ſurrender to the Lord; an immoderat fear of a ſtrok from men to the prejudice of preſent and neceſſary dutie, may bring with it ſome ſad immediat ſtroks in the diſpleaſure of the Lord from his hand; yea, that he ſhould thus bereave his Church of many choyſeſt inſtruments by his verie immediat hand, to make it appear the anger and jealouſie of the moſt high God, is more to be dreaded, then the wrath and violence of all our adverſaries: But yet in the cloſe of theſe judgmenrs even when a Church may ſeem quite conſumed, and her ſtrength worn out, have we not there ſome ground of hope that the Lord may prevent his peoples thoughts by as marvelous, as immediat reſtoring providences, when he ſees their power is gone, and that there is none to help; yea, is it not eaſie with him and like his way, to return and reſtore what the former years have taken away, by the locuſt and caterpiller, &c. which he had ſent amongſt them. *Joel* 2. 25.

9. There is a ſtep of the holy providence of God and his unſpotted judgment, which would alſo ſeem ſtrange and amazing, that which is inflicted upon the ſoul and conſcience by an immediat ſtrok of judical induration, and is verie evident; Oh how undeniably evident, and clear at this day! that men under great light, ſome ſpecial diſcoveries of God, after known convictions and wreſtlings of conſcience, yea, after ſolemne engagements and their declared reſolution to follow the Lord in his way have yet come ſuch a length and degree in a deliberat reſiſting and oppo-

sing themselves to him and his truth without the least appearance of a check or trouble: I confess this is one of the marvelous things of God, and a verie visible demonstration of his being, who hath such a dominion over the soul, both in its hardning and softening; But no cause to stumble hereat, it do's truly cal us to fear, and is a stroke that may force on Atheists the awfull conviction of a Deity; or though it is not felt by these who are under the same, because the want of sense and feeling is a part of that disease, yet all who look on (if they did not shut their own eyes) may learn to know this is the verie work of God, and a piece of his judgement which he maks known in the earth; But let us aske the Scripture & we shall finde in stead of any ground for stumbling what a special confirmation this should be of the truth since it is clear.

1. How in this the way of the Lord is holy and righteous, who is under no debt, no obligation to the sons of men. *Rom.* 9. 18. but is absolutly free to let forth grace to, or with hold from whom he pleaseth; his blessed will being the alone rule of righteonsnes, he comprehends the reason of all his counsel and judgments which are to us incomprehensible, yet do's he so farr condescend to let men see his unspotted justice aswel as his Soveraignitie in this shines forth, that they who are unjust by a deliberat choise should be unjust stil by a further arest *Rev.* 22. and these who will not hearken, and wil have none of him should be deliverd up the lusts of their own heart. *Ps.* 81: 11. we see in what a measure Pharaoh was hardened of the Lord, which was a plagne worse then the other ten: But we find *Exo.* 6. 34. that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, and thus was a stroke suted to such a resolute resisting of light. 2. Do's not the Scripture shew the marvellous convoy of this judgment

Is.

Isa. 6. 6. how this sad sentence is immediatly passed on the soul; yea, by these most singular means, the word and ordinances for enlivening, is execute thereon, men preached deaf and dead, where others find life; this is a stroke, that do's not draw a barr betwixt them, and external fellowship with the ordinances; But O it draws an invisible barr betwixt them and the power and efficacie thereof; it is a judgment that walks in the dark, and binds where none can loose, it killeth without a cry; yea gives men a death stroke, when the pain of that wound is not felt. 3. Do you not see how this strange judgment is in as great a height & measure held forth by the Scripture as yow see it in any example before your eyes, that men will be mad in their opposition to God, even when he is most remarkablie opposing them, such as Ahaz who did trespasse the more, the more he was distressed, 2 *Chro.* 28. 22. Yea, such who with these men of Sodome would grope after the door, & persist in that wickednes when God hath immediatly smitten them with blindnes for the same: O what may be the nixt stroke, where men renew their assault against God after he hath once and again smitten them, who in stead of repenting under his sore plagues turns enraged to blaspheme him, who hath power over the same: is not that a strange degree of judical induration, *Act.* 7. 57. that when they saw the face of Stephen shine, and looked stedfastly thereon they did then run with furie against him; Yea, it may be seen in all ages that such a length this judgment will come to look on the most convincing extraordinarie judgments of God on others, and yet not be moved therewith themselves, that when his hand is lifted up they will not see, but the posteriry take up the same quarrel & pursue it wherein they have seen their fathers fall under the strok of an

avenging God. 4. We may alſo know from the Scripture how deep this judgment may draw in its dreadfull effects, what a judical areaſt is thus ſerved on men by which they are bound over to deſtruction, and their bands made ſtrong on them, as that they can neither ſtirr nor move, but as malefactors shut up in jail, and under fetters; which is not more evidenr before the execution then this areaſt on their ſoul is by obduration before ſome further ſtroke, thus they ly neer ſudden deſtruction and a blow that is irrecoverable who have harden'd themſelves under frequent reproofs. *Prov.* 26. It is knowne what Pharaohs laſt rebuke was after he had rejected many, it ſtands upon publick record to after ages; I ſhall adde, is there not ſomething of hell here? and of theſe everlaſting fetters in ſome meaſure made viſible in the earth, for where light & conviction do's reſolve in rage and malice againſt the truth, nothing can be more like hell, or have a more neer reſemblance to the devil.

10. I ſhall adde one inſtance more which may ſeem alſo ſtrange and a marvelous piece of the providence of God, that the righteous ſhould fall, and have one event with the wicked in a time of judgment, whilſt wee ſee ſome notour for wickednes, and their horrid actings in oppoſition to the Church goe to the grave in peace, as to any remarkable ſtrok from the Lord upon them, I know men are ready to wonder hereat; Yea, thence an Atheiſt will inferr things muſt fall out at an adventure; But O if theſe would bring this to th Scripture and ſet it foreagainſt the ſame! they ſhould there ſee how convincingly it is verified, and that there is nothing here which do's not clearly agree with that bleſſed record; for it ſhews. 1. That by no external providences or any thing diſpenſed within time, yea, by no affliction

obvious

obvious to ſenſe the way of the Lord, and his reſpects to his people can be judged, even amidſt the great varietie of events, which here fall out; But we are in this obliged to adore God whoſe judgments are incomprehenſible when we ſee at the ſame time, *a juſt man periſh in his righteouſnes, and a wicked man prolong his life in wickednes. Eccl. 7. 15.* 2. The Scripture gives us this return alſo anent ſuch a providence, why the ſword devours both, and as Saul and Ionathan fall together, that there, the Lord do's in a ſpecial way difference betwixt one and another, Ioſias died in peace, as was promiſed, 2 *Kings. 22. 20.* yet he fell upon the high places of the field in the common judgment; But he was then taken from the evill to come, yea, thus was delivered, even by a ſtrok of the hot diſpleaſure of God on others; It is not ſtrange that ſome may be hid in the grave from a further ſtorme by the ſame judgment wherein the Lord is purſueing the land in which they have their abode. 3. It is clear from the Scripture how ſmall an acceſſion to a ſinful courſe, may in the holy diſpleaſure of God bring ſome of his people under the ſame ſtroke with his adverſaries, and ſo farr involve them in that judgment; wee find *Pſ. 1. 1.* there is a ſtanding in the way, and joining in the counſel of the ungodly held forth as a partaking with them in their ſin; and *Ezek. 9.* tells us, that not mourning for, and witneſſing a diſſent againſt the national ſins of the time, puts men farr out of that bleſſed roll of theſe whom the Lord do's difference from others by a mark of his preſervation. Now as to that other, how it is the wicked prolong their days in wickednes, and may goe in ſome external peace to the grave, do but enquire at the Scripture, and it will ſhew. 1. It was no leſs ſtrange to the Prophet Ieremiah Cap. 12. *Yea they proſper and*

took root, did it not amaze that bleſſed man *Pſ.* 73. that not only *their eyes ſtand out with fatnes*, *but they have no bands in their death.* But 2. Is not the way of the Lord in this manifeſt, how graciouſly he prevents ſome by a ſad temporal ſtroke, and can ſerve himſelf of a ſcaffold or gibbet to bring about their mercie, as he did to the theef on the croſs, whilſt he plagues others by a long forbearance, and his holding off ſuch ſtrokes *Eccl.* 8. 11. the dreadfull effects whereof are held forth, becauſe ſentence is not ſpeedily execute againſt wicked men, their heart is therefore ſet on miſchief. 3. As in everie age we are called to adore the Soveraignitie of God in ſuch a thing, he gives men alſo cauſe to obſerve his great judgments, ſome remarkable ſtroks on his adverſaries, which they cannot paſs without ſuch a remark, *Behold a man that made not God his ſtrength*, *Pſ.* 52. *ver.* 7. But we muſt further wait for that full diſcrimination which the laſt ſentence of the judge ſhall put betwixt theſe who fear the Lord and theſe who fear him not. (¶)

THE THIRD ARGUMENT

FOr the Scriptures accomplishment is this; that which not onely the Chriſtians experience, and obſervation of the Church beareth witneſs thereto, but is alſo *a truth which even to the view*, *and conviction of the world*, *may be demonſtrat*, from whom it doth oft force a teſtimony, yea, in every age the worſt of men have been forced to acknowledge, it muſt be a thing very evident. But the accomplishment of the Scripture can be thus witneſſed, therefore; &c.

It is true theſe ſweet, and ſenſible enjoyments which the Saints have of this truth, the World cannot reach;

reach; but it is alſo ſure, that in every age, the works of the Lord, and ſome more notour; convincing providences, both of judgement, and mercy do ſolemnly invite men, to obſerve the accomplishment of the word therein; yea, no time hath wanted ſomething of a publick witneſſe, from ungodly men, even greateſt mockers of Religion, who under that conſtraining power of conſcience at death, or in ſome day of their ſtrait, have been forced to ſeal the truth by a very open confeſſion of the righteouſnes of God towards them; and this is indeed the Lords bleſſed deſign in making his works ſometime ſo conſpicuous, that they may not only confirm the faith of his people, but render Atheiſm inexcuſable, that the glory of his faithfulnes, as well as of his power, and wiſdome may ſhine forth before the ſons of men. I confeſſe we may wonder, why the World looketh ſo little upon this, and how the conviction of ſo great a truth, which they cannot ſhun, doth not more preſſe them; but the Holy Ghoſt doth fully reſolve this, the brutish man knoweth not, neither do fooles lay to heart, how the Scripture taketh place, that flowrishing of wicked men, is but in judgement for their further ruine.

To proſecut this argument alittle, there are ſome ſpecial truths I would inſtance, wherein the faithfulnes of God in fulfilling his word may be ſeen by the World, yea is obvious to the moſt ordinary obſervers, and though they be but a few, which I ſhall here touch, yet I muſt ſay, they are ſuch concerning truths, and have ſo neer a reference to the foundation of our faith, that men cannot acknowledge the ſame, but muſt alſo confeſſe the Scriptures Divinity, and that there is a truth, and reality in godlines and in Chriſtian Religion; I may truly here with ſome con-

confidence challenge the greateſt Atheiſts, yea, appeale them to their conſcience, and ſerious thoughts, if in theſe following inſtances, (though but a little of what might be ſaid on ſuch a ſubject,) the truth & accomplishment of the Scripture be not very manifeſt.

FIRST. I ſhall firſt hold forth this truth that *man is ſurely fallen from that excellent eſtate wherein once he was formed*, *Rom.* 5. *ver.* 18. 19. and now is not that which he was at the beginning; a truth ſo clear, that we may ſay even without the diſcovery of the word might be eaſy for any ſerious onlooker to diſcern the ſame, yea had not even heathens ſome glance at this? The evidence whereof they could not altogeth'shun.

It is true the cauſe, & original of this dreadful contagion, how ſin entered into the World, how it is derived to the whole race of man, imputation, as well as inheſion, how that poiſon is carried from the fountain to the ciſtern, the Scripture doth only diſcover; bur this I am ſure may be obvious to all, that poor man is thus ſick, and diſeaſed, and now beareth the marks of ſuch a fall, and ruine, as we read of in the word. I confeſs, it is ſtrange that when this is ſo very convincing & manifeſt, it ſhould not force men to ſome more ſerious enquiry, whence ſuch a thing is, or if there can be a recovery of ſo ſad, and deſperat like caſe, but to clear this a little, I would offer theſe three things to be conſidered.

1. That there is ſome remainder of that excellent fabrick, which may yet appear among its ruines, ſome print, and appearance (though dark) of that primitive luſtre and beauty, ſome draughts which ſin hath not wholly worn out, that may clearly tell what

what man once was, and point out his former excellency, that he hath been an other wight, of whom Abſaloms character might be truely ſaid, without all blemish from the head to the foot. For we ſee the deep impreſſions of a Deity ſtill rooted in men, even among the moſt wilde, and ſavage which no invention can utterly raze, we ſee ſome common principles of reaſon that are imprinted in the moſt rude, and ignorant, ſome innate notions, and Ideas which the ſoul hath of good, and evil, among all, and in every place of the earth, likewiſe theſe natural truths κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι which we may ſee are no wayes impreſt on the ſoul from any objects of ſenſe, but ſuch whereto men by an unavoidable neceſſity are forced to aſſent, and beſides, what meaneth the witneſs of the conſcience, and authority thereof in every man, which they cannot poſſibly decline? O doe not theſe witneſs that from ſome great height poor man hath fallen.

3. Doth not the preſent appearance of mans nature, clearly shew he is fallen into ſome dreadful diſeaſe, that it is ſurely overſpread with ſome horrid leproſie, and contagion, the ſymptomes whereof now are moſt diſcernable. O what an exorbitancy doth appear in his deſires, with what contrary tydes, is he hurried? ſtill at jar with his preſent lot; his reaſon and will, once in a ſweet league, are now at warr, betwixt which he is oft rent in pieces, as one betwixt wilde horſes; how is he now reſtleſs in an unreaſonable purſuit, he laboureth in the fire, and for a ſhadow; yea, what doe theſe tumults, and commotions of the earth mean, men upon the ſmalleſt account sheathing their ſwords in others bowels, *homo homini lupus*; ruptures in families, unſatiable in revenge, and the earth ſo oft in an uproar as a ra-

ging

ging sea. O doe not these too visibly witness what a dreadful disorder, and perturbation there must be within, impetuous boyling of mans lusts, so that here we may see a very manifest rupture, and breach of a building once well knitt and framed.

3. I would ask wherein mans true advantage and excellency, above others of the creatures can be seen, if not with some respect to that he once was, and that blessed restauration by grace; for his knowledge doth oft serve but to increase his sorrow, to shew the good he wanteth, and the evil he is subject to; is there any of the creatures subject to such outward misery, and pain? to so many diseases? yea as to a sensual life, may we not say the beasts have even some preference? or are these so unruely? do they so much go out of their bounds, and station? which the many lawes made for man in the world with the convincing necessity thereof can witness; we see also that sore travel is appointed to man; at how much toil he is for an outward subsistance, how he doth oft sow, and not reap; the beasts withdraw from the yoke, these over whom he had dominion ready to assault him, how women bring forth their children in sorrow, the men are attended with fear, their life oft made bitter with care and labour, yea, as men increase in the world, their care and discontent increasing therewith, but besides all, is he not in the greatest slavery of all the creatures through the violence of his lusts? that make him pursue the baite, though he knoweth it will undoe him, while his corruption doth oft like a strong man bind him in fetters, and his flesh imperiously drag him at its heels; O may we not say, was poor man thus framed at the beginning? or raised so far above the rest of the creatures only to make him the more miserable, for truely if a vive portraicture could

could be drawn of ſinful depraved nature, there is none ſo groſſe but ſhould abhor, yea be affrighted, to ſee that in the third perſon, with which alace, they ſo friendly comply in themſelves.

SECOND. *That ſo great a change is truely wrought upon men in converſion*, as the Scripture doth promiſe, and hold forth, *Ioh.* 3: *ver.* 3, 6. *Eph.* 2. *ver.* 1, 5. *Coloſſ.* 3: *ver.* 1, 2. wherein ſome thing above nature, even the marvellous power of the grace of God may be ſeen, is a truth I am ſure, known, and undenyable to the world, yea, the greateſt mockers at religion muſt confeſſe, can be no deluſion, but is indeed real, and certain; upon theſe following grounds.

1. That the moſt groſſe, who in their practice have been notourly profane, in the place wherein they lived, it hath been ſeen, how grace hath reached them, and thus the Leopard hath been made to change his ſpots, and ſuch who were accuſtomed to do evil have learned to doe well. O! Doe not many famous inſtances witnes this, in every age; 2. That alſo men moſt principled in their judgement againſt the way of God, who were wont to deride holines as fancie, even on ſuch, ſo great a change hath been wrought as hath made the world to wonder; but then they were forced to lay down their prejudice, yea to wonder at themſelves, how they could ſtand before the truth ſo long, whereof they have got ſuch an impreſſion; ſure Atheiſts muſt grant there have been as proteſt Atheiſts as themſelves, who have been made eminent examples of grace. 3. That ſuch even in the height of their wickednes (like Paul breathing out cruelty, and of late *Vergerius* while he was writing againſt the truth) grace hath ſometimes reached them,

them, it hath been found that of Christs greateſt enemies ſome have thus fallen upon their high places before the power of the word; ſome ſuch trophees of the goſpels conqueſt have been conſpicuous in every age; yea it is oft ſeen that ſome remarkable height in ſin, hath proved an evident Criſis, and turn in mens condition either to judgement, or mercy. 4. That ſome of the moſt eminent adverſaries of the truth have, through grace, been made eminently uſeful inſtruments in the Church, the world cannot deny; that there have not been choiſer veſſels of honour, more zealous for the Lord in their time then ſuch, who were once moſt violent in their oppoſition. 5. That ſuch whom the world did reckon moſt wiſe, and diſcerning, yea that did want no judgement to know the value of outward things, as well as others, grace hath reached; can the Atheiſts object, do any of the rulers, or Rabbies believe in Chriſt, or follow that way, when it is ſo clear that not more wiſe, learned, and judicious (even themſelves being judges) have been in their time, then ſome who are moſt ſerious in the matter of Religion. 6. Hath not this change been made diſcernable upon the ſimple, the moſt ſtupid, and dull, yea, upon ſome ſuch, as a natural incapacity might have obſtructed the worke, if ſomething above nature had not carried it on, which may be alſo manifeſt by ſome change even on their underſtanding, to ſhew that this can make the ſimple wiſe, and in the way of holines, the way-faring man though fool ſhall not err. 7. That by a very improbable mean, the word, and that ſometimes by weakeſt inſtruments, wee ſee this great change hath been wrought, and it is remarkable, how litle of the work of converſion did follow the putting forth of miracles in the primitive times, but by the ſim-

ſimplicity of the preached goſpel much more, for indeed the converſion of a ſoul, and ſuch a change is it ſelfe ſome way a miracle. 8. That they are not a few on whom this change hath been wrought is undenyable; and truely beſides theſe ordinary proofs I think it is a great want there ſhould not be ſome more ſpecial record by the Church, of theſe illuſtrious, and eminent inſtances of the grace of God, which have been in ſuch an age, as well as remarkable inſtances of judgment. 9. Men muſt ſee this falleth not out at an adventure which is wrought upon one, and not an other while both are alike diſcerning, yea, ſome who ſeem furtheſt from the grace of God, very groſſe, and rude, have been taken, when the more civil, and refined, and of a more promiſing natural diſpoſition have been paſt by. O doth not this witneſs the grace of God, and ſoveraignity thereof. 10. Is not this change oft diſcernable upon men in a time while no advantage from without doth appear? even times of preſecution and hazard, from which many have dated their firſt acquaintance with God, when they could expect nothing but a ſuffering lot, ſure there muſt be ſomething above nature in it. 11. It is alſo known how great a cloud of witneſſes have ſealed this truth, O can there be ſuch an univerſal enchantment, that in every age, in ſeveral yea in moſt remote places of the earth, hath fallen upon ſo many, who have witneſſed the power of the Goſpel; or can all theſe be void of underſtanding? What gain, or outward advantage could they deſigne in that which is ſo uſually attended with outward hazard, and loſſe, or what credit from men, while it maketh them the very butt of the worlds hatred, aud reproach? Yea, can it be thought that all theſe could have combined to conſpire into ſo great a cheat? I muſt appeale A-

theists to their serious thouggts of this matter. 12. The marvellous effect of this change, doth it not witness this is no fancy, or delusion, when men are reached with such a stroke, and by one word, as hath made the stout hearted and most daring to tremble, and to shew by their very countenance that there is an other tribunal then mans, before which they are arraigned? Must it not be sad earnest and a marvelous power, that can make so willing a divorce betwixt men, and their idols, which were once as their right eye to them, and beat them off that ground of self-righteousnes, which they had been so long establishing to themselves, that should cause them also chose the reproach of Christ, and his crosse before any outward advantage, and abandon that society without which sometimes they could not live? Must not this speak forth something above natural reason. O! may not the world oft wonder what is become of their old friends, though I confesse this should rather put them with wonder, and astonishment, to some serious enquiry, whence so great a change can be.

(¶) It is strange the World do's not more wonder at *Conversion* which is so great a miracle, yea, may be said one of the greatest hath been in the earth, since it is no lesse marvelous, then to raise out of the grave such who are truely dead; O how convincingly demonstrative is this of the truth and reality of grace, yea even to the view of the World do's witness an irresistible efficacious power with the word, that converteth the soul, enlightens the eye, and maketh wise the simple, *Psal.* 19: *ver.* 7. Should we not with astonishment look on a Christian if we did seriously consider what a change the grace of God makes here, from what he once was, and how great a change glo-

ry

ry will ere long make from that he now is; I know there are many things we wonder at from our ignorance; But oh! it is mens ignorance and estrangement from this, makes it so little their wonder, for, if we be assuredly perswaded of the truth of *Conversion* which the World cannot deny, without a contradiction both to sense and reason, we have then three great truths unanswerably demonstrat. 1. That the Scripture of God is faithful and true, which holds this forth. 2. That there is a divine Spirit, and a power above nature, that do's certainly accompany the same. 3. It is then clear, there are two contraire states in another World, since they are here so manifest: Now besides these evidences already mentioned, I would here offer some further upon so grave and weightie a subject, to shew how very clear and convincing the demonstration of this truth is, that the World cannot but see the very immediat power of God and something above nature in *Conversion*, if they do not shut their eyes thereat; Consider but these,

1. Is it not a strange and marvelous thing that could change one species of a creature into another, turn a wolf or tyger into a lamb, sure this would be astonishing; yet such a change is here, which makes so vast a difference betwixt one and himself, takes him off his former delights and exercises, his old friends and society, with whom he once thought the time short, yea can cause the man who was a persecuter of the truth, and took pleasure therein rejoice to suffer persecution on that same account; I think the World will not debate, where so many known instances are at all times obvious. 2. Is it not marvelous which can estrange men from their worldly interests and take their heart off that which was as their right eye, and

ſubdue under them that which once took them cap
tive at its pleaſure; O do's it not ſhew they have got
their eyes opened to ſee things which were formerly
hid! Yea, how ſtrange is it that theſe whoſe prædominant was love to the World, and have been in
their natural diſpoſition moſt narrow and gripping,
that they could not allow themſelves the comfortable
uſe of that they had, even theſe this change hath ſo
powerfully reached to cauſe a willing ſurrender and
quiting of all for Chriſt: I could offer known inſtances
anent this, and theſe at as great an advantage then in
the exerciſe of their judgment and reaſon as ever,
whom the World might ſee were moſt ſerious and
compoſed therein. 3. Would you debate the efficacious power of that which ſhould melt and diſſolve
the hardeſt ſtone, and may you not wonder what a
power this muſt be, which will make men melt and
diſſolve in tears and ſtand trembling before the word,
who through their life were knowne to be moſt obdured and ſtupide; Yea, is not this great change
ſometimes with ſuch terrour and downcaſting uſhered in, that may convince onlookers it is a matter
of greateſt earneſt and no counterfeit; and ſurely
theſe muſt be reached by ſome power, before which
there is no ſtanding. 4. How great a thing is that
which takes men unawarſe beyond their thoughts and
intention, Mathew and theſe other diſciples did not
know in the morning what ſhould befall them before night; it was indeed a happie day, when on their
return they had that account to give, wee have found
the Meſſias, and it is ſure many ſince have been thus
ſurpriſed, yea, in one hour have got ſuch a ſight which
will never goe from their heart, they now ſee what
report could never have made them believed, they
now know what it is to be taken out of a dreadful
gulfe

gulfe of darknes unto a marvelous light; and truely there is this usually discernable in it how some one vvord will force its passage and take fire within as a word beyond all others fitly spoken and fitted by divine appointment to open the heart. 5. It is a marvelous change which do's even reach young ones, and these sometimes of an age little above infancie, for it is certainly known how such vvhose years might shevv there vvas no designe to cheat the vvorld, yea, sometime in a familie vvhere little advantage for their education hath appeared, have given evidence of this vvonderfully, above themselves and their age, yea, at death have vvitnessed some povver of the grace of God, and his Spirit on their soul, their hope and the grounds of it, vvith such judgment and seriousness as hath forced on bystanders this discoverie, of an immediat teaching of the Spirit, & of a mightie power of God, that can witness in these ere they can well speake or exerce reason, the power of Religion. Owhence should this be! and truly for the truth thereof I could offer known instances, if it should be brought on debate. 6. What a change is it that do's also reach men in their old age, who have been long rooted and inured to the world, who have sitt many a call in their resisting the Gospel; yet is it not seen how these in their old gray hairs, have been made to weep and confess after sixtie or seventy years living under the Gospel, that then only they begun to know what it is to be Christians; I confess this is one of the rare trophies of the grace of God, yet no age wants some such instances to prove, how far grace can prevail over nature, custome, education and all these disadvantages which use to follow the time of old age. 7. What a strange power is it which hath been so evidently witnessed on some horridly fla-

gitious, who have outrun others in all manner of wickednes; yea, even then whilst justice was crying for punishment to cutt them off, grace hath stept in to save, and reached them at a scaffold or gibbet; it is sure the world cannot question this truth, and O should it not be convincing to see two brought to a publick death for some grosse crime who have the same hazard before them, the same means made use of for their conviction, yet the one melting in contrition, the other most obdured; you cannot say that this is from a different nature and constitution, since sometimes these of a more promising nature and better disposition have been seen further off, then such of vvhom least vvas expected. 8. Is it not a strange change vvhich, even on these vvhere no ordinary means could be subservient, can be vvitnessed, vvhere no company, no example, no usual vvay for instruction can be alleadged, so that it may be seen, they have been truly taught of the Lord, that there is such a thing as his immediat teaching; that in a verie extraordinary vvay by means most improbable he can convoy himself in to the soul, in a vvord, this can be no result of ones natural complexion, for, then it vvould appear in, and accompany their younger years in some measure, and grovv up vvith them; this change also in these of most different natures, most unlike and cross to others humour and disposition is made discernable; yea, must it not be something above moral svvasion, or any perswasives of humane eloquence? since here the foolishnes of preaching is found more effectual, then any such way; yea, it is seen how the most sublime and polish'd strains of oratorie, and greatest gifts have oft come short of that succes, which hath followed

more

more improbable means; I shall adde, O is not this something above nature which makes men partake of the divine nature, and do's so visibly impress the image of God on them.

I shall shut this up with three remarkable instances of the power and efficacy of grace in *Conversion*, of which in every age there may be a large record. First that excellent man *Junius*, whose life we have in some measure set down by himself, with many notable remark's of providences, and therein shews the Lords ingaging him at first, how being very loose, and carried away with evil company, yea tempted to Atheism, he was one day moved to goe and read the Scripture; and at the first opening, trysted with that of the first of Iohn; which whilst he read as he says did suddenly astonish him; and leave a marvellous conviction on his soul, of the divinity of the subject, the Majesty and Authority of the writting, that all day he knew not where, and what he was; but thus turns himself with these words to the Lord, Thou wast mindefull of me, O my God, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies; Yea, giv's this accompt that he then had a sight of the Scripture, which made him see it did exceed all humane eloquence, and this was followed with such power that his body trembled, and his minde became astonished, with such a surprising and marvellous light; and from that day begun to be serious in the vvay of the Lord.

A second instance I shall offer is, the remarkable *Conversion* of worthie Master *Bolton*, a choise Minister in the Church of England, in whose life this is recorded, that being eminentlie prophane, a horrid swearer, and much accustomed to mock at holiness, and these who most shined therein, and particularly

that excellent Man of God Mr *Perkins*, then Preacher in *Cambridge*, whom he much undervalued for his plainnes in preaching the truths of God, yea was near the length of Poperie; but on the Lords gracious appearance to him, was put to have other thoughts, with a very remarkable change upon him, though with that terrour, that as he said himself, the Lord seemed to run upon him, like a giant, throwing him to the ground, and with such a terrifying discovery of sin, caused him roar in anguish, and oft rise in the night on that accompt, which continued for diverse moneths; Yea these assaults in the pangs of the new birth were such, that it might have been said, *Ut nec color, nec sensus, nec sanguis supereſſet*; but at last a blessed sun-shine brak up, and he after to his old age proved a burning, and shining light. Now besids these two great men, I think it not unsutable, since it is to commend the grace of God, & witnes the reality thereof, who of all kinde of sinners, as well as of all kindreds and nations, hath brought some to glory, that I sett down one very strange instance in this countrey, of a poor buggerer who not many years ago was put to death in the town of Air, for that horrid wickednes, he had been a most stupid, & brutish person, such an one who looked to all who knew him, as if he had been above the reach of ordinary means; but in the prison, the Lord did marvellously witnes the power of his grace, and in such a measure discovered to him his sinfulnes, that after much serious exercise upon his soul, and sore wrestling, a most kindly work of repentance did appear, with great assurance, so that when he came to the stake, he could not cease from crying out to the people, under the sence of pardon, and that comforting sunshine of the presence of God; O *he is a great forgi-*

forgiver, he is a great forgiver; and had therewith these words; now hath perfect love cast out all fear, I know God hath nothing to lay against me, for Jesus Christ hath payed all, and these are free whom the son makes free, thus in a transport of wonder and joy, did he die; the marvellous grace of God raising him then above other men, who not long before, seemed in some respect, below a beast. (¶)

THIRD. *That communion, and fellowship with God*, whereto the Saints are in this life admitted, and brought near to him in the spirit, *is a most real thing*, and no delusion, is a truth which may be very convincingly demonstrat, even to the view of the world, and to such who are but onlookers on the same. 1 *Joh.* 1: *ver.* 3. *Phil.* 3: *ver.* 20. I know this is a truth that must be spiritually discerned, and therefore the world cannot know it or reach that unspeakable joy, and delight which is found by the Saints in that sweet path; yet must say there are somethings, and some such convincing evidences, as may witness to men, and rationally demonstrat the same; the conviction whereof they cannot possibly shun, if they but come near, and in their serious thoughts consider.

1. How great, and excellent a company doe bear this testimony, even as many as in every time did ever serve God in the Spirit; is not this transmitted by the fathers to the children as their experience? And as certainly tried by succeeding ages, a truth which is not once, or twice proved in the Christians life, for the proofs thereof are innumerable, and past reckoning, which they have had, yea amongst all the Saints since the dayes of Abel, to this present time,

there was never one contradictory witneſs could be produced.

2. Are not theſe who do thus teſtify, what they have oft found in ſecret retirements to God, ſuch whoſe teſtimony in any other matter, the worſt of men could not refuſe or deny to be famous, I am ſure the World is convinced, that the followers of Chriſt dare not, yea, uſe not deal falſely in other things with theſe they have to do with, how ever their malice carry them to reproach them, yea, that they are more to be credited then ſuch, who make a ſcorn of Religion.

3. Have they not had as great intereſt, and share of the World as others, and been of as diſcerning ſpirits to know the true value of things, who from their experience doe not only declare, there is an undoubted reality in converſe with God, but that the joy and delight herein which they have found, is above all the pleaſures of the flesh. O! what muſt that be which could make ſuch who wanted no outward allurements, who had not loſt their taſte, and were flesh and blood as well as others to turn their back on all for Chriſt, and by their walk teſtify they have found ſome more ſatisfying enjoyment in fellowship with God?

4. Muſt not this be very obvious, and convincing that when men once become ſerious in the way of God they have got ſome new acquaintance, that ſure there is another world, and ſome other ſociety then that of men with which they have intercours; Whence are theſe frequent retirements, from which they have been ſeen ſo oft to come forth with greateſt ſatisfaction, and with ſome remarkable change in their caſe, doth it not thus appear *They are not alone, when they*

are

are alone, yea, in such a solitude must find something very desireable?

5. Is not this also testifyed in times, when men could not well dissemble, or be suspected of deceit, in times of great outward affliction, when the World also hath been most tempting, with its offers, yea, at death when they are stepping over that threshold; a time, wherein the words of dying men are of greatest weight, and credit, the spirits of such being then more unbyassed, and free of these ordinary temptations wherewith others are swayed. How oft have they at such times declared that surely God is familiar with men, which they have found, and though they were going to change their place, yet were not to change their company.

6. Can that be a delusion which is so sensible in the present time, whereof the Saints are not more sure that they live then they are sure of this truth, what near approaches, and refreshing viewes they have got, while God hath come near to their soul, what a discernable elevation of their spirits doth go along with this? yea, on the other hand, as the withdrawing hereof is very sensible to themselves, is there not something of this even obvious to bystanders, how great a change, and difference this will make in their case, from other times, which they cannot get hid.

7. Doth not something of this truth appear on the very countenance, and outward carriage of Christians, what a lustre, & resemblance of Heaven, a holy stayednes, and composure of spirit, when they have been brought neer God, in secret converse with him, & taken up to the mountain; in a word, doth not the walk of a serious mortified Christian convincingly witness this, yea, cannot but be some way astonishing to the world,

World, what should make them look so well, and with such satisfaction, when no visible cause for it, when shut up in prison from converse with friends, and acquaintance? Sure men will not think a rational spirit so demented to quite their former pleasures, and chose the crosse that they may only deceive the World, with a counterfeit joy and satisfaction, if they did not really find the same; and while it is too too evident, what a dreadful society and commerce many have with the Devil, should any question, or debate, whither the Saints have truely communion and fellowship with God the Father of Spirits, whom they serve, and worship,

FOVRTH. That the righteous is more excellent then his neighbour, Prov. 12: *ver.* 26. And hath an other spirit which is greater, and more choice, then that which is in the World, is a truth which, I am sure, men notwithstanding all their prejudice must needs confesse, and that therein the Scripture is truely verifyed, when such clear and convincing evidences, doe stare them in the face. I confesse the Saints are much under a dark cloud here, through the prevalency of corruption, yea, are oft accounted as the filth of the world, but when grace in any greater measure, and its vigorous exercise doth shew it selfe, then there appeareth so much as will darken all the grandour of this earth, and force men to see an excellency upon the saints, beyond any others, they cannot altogether shun such a conviction. First, what an evident difference is betwixt their way, who walk with God, and that of the most polished moralist, something is in the one which doth witnes a more excellent spirit, a higher elevation, a sweet harmony, and equability in their way, that they move in some higher

er ſphere, act from other principles; with a reſpect to ſome greater intereſt then any thing here, have more of a large heart to ſerve their generation, then theſe whoſe ſelf-intereſt is ſeen to be the firſt, and laſt in all their motions.

2. May it not alſo appear to onlookers that tender ſerious Chriſtians who live neer God, do truly witneſſe their reſemblance, and likeneſſe to him to whom they move, as to their great, and laſt end; yea, do evidence a more true excellency of ſpirit, what a ſweet calm, and ſerenity they have within, while going through things that are moſt croſſe, and vexing; with what diſcernable quietnes theſe can look upon moſt affrighting revolutions in the world, as ſuch, whoſe treaſure and great intereſt is beyond hazard, though the earth were all turned to ashes.

3. Is there not ſo much in the way and carriage of the ſaints, yea, ſuch a majeſty, and authority, that attendeth holines, as doth force reſpect, and fear, even from theſe who moſt hate them, yea and doth force men to juſtify ſuch in their conſcience, whom they openly reproach, and perſecut; whence it is that a ſerious tender Chriſtian, is oft a ſcar-crow, and terrour to the prophane, when there is no outward cauſe for it, but that they are ſtruck with the conviction of a more excellent ſpirit in theſe, carrying ſuch a reſemblance to the image of God as forceth fear, and ſubjection from that ſpirit which is in the world.

4, Doth not a Chriſtian, and holy walk cauſe men ſhine, as a light in the midſt of a crooked & perverſe generation, yea darken all their neighbours; and in the darkeſt night, is it not ſeen how grace ſhineth with the greateſt luſtre, what a ſweet, and odoriferous ſent, doth this ſend through the countrey where they

they live, that may shew to all how great a difference there is betwixt such, and these who are wallowing in this puddle of the earth.

5. Is it not obvious what a lustre and beauty, yea, something more becoming our immortal soul that is in the self-denial of Christians, their bearing injuries, forgiving such as injure them, without reviling, then in that proud vindictive spirit that is in the world, that sure such walke by a more excellent rule, and move from a higher principle.

6. It may be also evident to the world, what an other spirit is in these, who do not bow with the speate of every time, nor yeeld to men because of their outward power, then in that spirit which is in the world, that while the one doth presse men to save themselves on any tearms, the other doth cause the Christian take up his crosse, yea lay down his life, to save his conscience; and whence is that patience, and resolution by which the godly in times of suffering have overcome their persecutors, their bold avowing of the truth before men, when hazards are most obvious, & that advantage wherewith they appear above others in such a time. O! doth it not clearly witnes, they are of an other mettal, who doe thus abide the fire, yea become more bright by that wherewith others are consumed?

I would add that vvhich the vvorld cannot deny, hovv this spirit, vvhich is in the Saints, hath prevailed over the greatest entisements of carnal gain, and pleasure, which to many may seem a wonder, as the Popish party did once say of Luther, *Bestia hæc non curat aurum*, that which they did speak in contempt, that it did prove him a beast, did in effect shew him therein, to be something above men; for that is a thing before which the spirit of the world could never stand.

FIFTH.

FIFTH. *That the promised encouragement which is held forth to the People of God under trouble and suffering for his name is a truth*, and the Scripture herein verifyed, I am sure not onely Christian experience, can witnes, but may even to the observation of others, be demonstrat from very convincing grounds, that it is no fancy or deluſion, *Pſ.* 9: *ver.* 9. *Iſ.* 51. *ver* 12.

1. The very countenance and outward appearance of the godly, in a ſuffering time, doth oft declare the peace, and tranquillity of their ſoul, ſo as ſurely they muſt have joy, and ſatisfaction from whence the world doth not know, and have ſome other correſpondence, then with things viſible, for it may be oft ſaid, as of Daniel, and his fellows that under greateſt preſſures, and a very mean condition, they look as well, yea, with as much chearfulnes as theſe who live on the Kings allowance.

2. It can be no counterfeit, which ſhould thus reconcile the chriſtian with a ſuffering lot, for it is known how very ſearching affliction and trouble proveth, which oft doth broach the veſſel, and bring forth what hath formerly moſt cloſely lurked: And O! Doth not that holy confidence, and freedome which the Saints have evidenced in confeſſing the truth, before the princes of this world and their moſt cruel adverſaries, yea, that chearfulnes which in moſt extream pieces of ſuffering they oft doe witneſs, even when they are reſiſting to the blood, doth not this ſpeak forth ſomething beyond the gallantry of a natural ſpirit, that far exceedeth the ordinary way of men, and is a thing the world cannot but wonder, and whither they will, or not ſee Gods very immediat help, and hand in the ſame, according to his word?

3. It

3. It it not ſeen how the cheerful way of the Godly under ſuffering, while there is no outward ground for the ſame doth not only aſtonish, but is an exceeding torment to adverſaries? when they are forced to ſee, how all their endeavours (when their wrath and malice hath been to the outmoſt put forth) have yet been in vain, either to turn them aſide, or to ruine their encouragement, but that the moſt ſharp ſufferings of Godly, doe ſtill give them the foreſt dash, help to ſtrengthen others, juſtify Gods way, and that tender reſpect he hath to his ſuffering people, even before all onlookers.

4. Is it not alſo manifeſt, that ſuch whoſe natural diſpoſition was known to be very fainting and timorous, yet when called to ſuffer for the truth have without the leaſt appearance of diſcouragement, showed an invincible reſolution, and not only their own feares, but the expectation of others hath a marvellous diſappointment. O is there not there a viſible fulfilling of the Scripture, that ſhaking reeds ſhould be made to ſtand, where ſtrongeſt cedars have bowed, yea, ſome of very mean, and ordinary parts have been ſo diſcernably raiſed above themſelves, as they were made to confound the wiſe, and learned.

5. Muſt it not be confeſſed that the zeal and reſolution of the ſaints did never more appear then in times of greateſt oppoſition? that at no time they have looked more like Chriſtians with more advantage, and with ſome peculiar beauty, and luſtre of the grace of God, then under ſuffering, a thing which as it eminently doth commend the goſpel, hath alſo ſo far convinced their enemies, as in ſome meaſure it hath blunted their edge, and taken off their prejudice againſt the way of God, and followers thereof.

6. I may appeal the greateſt Atheiſts to their conſcience,

ſcience, if any moral arguments (what ever influence they may have upon mens patient enduring) could ever produce ſuch effects as rejoycing in tribulation the chooſing affliction before ſin, & all its pleaſures, to triumph over preſecutors, & to go with ſuch a calme, and chearfulnes to a ſcaffold, to ſing amidſt a dark priſon, yea, and to abound, and have all things under greateſt want? O! whence is this? ſure ſomething above nature muſt be here, that is ſtronger then moral reaſons, by which the Saints have thus overcome the world, yea, is it not obvious to all who look on, how great a difference there is betwixt the pretended reſolution of a natural ſpirit in death & ſuffering, and that joy, and confidence of a Chriſtian, which hath then ſhewed in the compoſure and tranquillity of their ſoul within? The one being but a dark ſhadow, and the other drawn to the life.

SIXTH. That there is a conſcience within men, whoſe power both is a judge, and witnes doth anſwer that clear diſcovery, the Scripture giveth thereof, Rom. 2: ver. 9. Is a thing obvious even to the world which they muſt needs confeſſe both from its viſible effect on others, and the working thereof within themſelves; that herein the Word is verifyed theſe things make it clear, and undenyable.

1. That ſure there is ſomething within which thus maketh men affrayed to be alone with themſelves, yea, will cauſe them go abroad, and frame diverſions to be out of its noiſe, muſt it not be ſad earneſt, which hath ſo dreadful a ſound in their ear, doth haunt the wicked man whither he will, or not? wherewith he would gladly be at peace, but amidſt his greateſt mirth, and proſperity, this doth mingle his wine with gall, and wormwood.

2. Is it not alſo ſure that men have oft an accuſer within their breaſt, while they ſeem to brave it out before others, whoſe judgment, and ſentence they can by no meanes decline, but after the committing of ſin, yea, on the back of their ſinful pleaſures doth follow the ſame with a bitter ſting, and ring this dreadful knell in their ear, that in the end their way will be bitterneſs. O! is not this an accuſing conſcience, which doth begin the torment of ſome before the time?

3. What is it that ſhould make mens guilt ſo legible oft in their countenance, even when they ſtudie moſt to conceale it, and thus cauſe them give their tongue the lye, yea, bewray to byſtanders whither they will or not, ſome ſecret trouble, and ſore they have within, doth it not clearly ſhew the power of the conſcience, which hath ſuch authority on men, that without violence, or conſtraint from others, doth even force them to confeſſe the truth, and ſupply the room of witneſſes?

4. Whence is it ſome are ſo much diſquieted for ſecret ſins, which the eyes of others could not reach, yea that ſome groſſe ſins, even the moſt profligat amongſt men have an horrour at them without reſpect to outward hazard, doth it not ſhew the power of a natural conſcience, that holdeth forth a greater party then the world with which they have to do, to whom all things are manifeſt, and ſome greater witneſs then that of man?

5. How is it that even greateſt men whom the world could not reach, and in the midſt of all probable advantages have yet often moſt affrighting thoughts, much terrour, and diſquieting reflexions? muſt it not be from within which doth cauſe them fear

fear an other power then that of the world, and a judgement greater then of men?

6. What must it be which doth force men to justify God when his hand doth pursue them, and maketh them so easily find out sin in a time of their strait, why is the sense of guilt, so very affrighting at death, is it not the conscience which doth presage a future judgement, and extend its power to matters of an everlasting concernment, and duration?

7. What should make men tremble at the word and so much hate a searching ministery, is it not because the light doth torment them, though the word doth particularly name none, but that there is something within, which maketh application of the truth, and doth plainly say, thou art the man?

8. How doe the worst of men oft justify these in secret, whom they openly have condemned, that while they are even persecuting the saints for truth and holines, yet, for these they give them, and their way a favorable testimony, over the belly of all their prejudices, yea what is it that doth cause a secret fear, and awful regard, of such whom they hate, doth it not shew something within, whose judgement they are not able to resist?

9. I must further ask whence is that horrour, and these dreadful cryes, and groans which wicked men oft have in their sickness, even such who were wont to sport at sin, with a daring countenance; can the world get this past without some remark, how intollerable a thing an evil conscience is, when once let loose, when in all ages such terrifying examples of this kinde have been set up for all that past by to look on, such as Spira, Latomus, Olivarius, &c. and truly, I think it is a great want there should not be a more particular record of such, which

would give Atheiſme ſo great a dash, yea, force men to confeſſe the truth of a Deity, and of the written word.

(¶) This is a great truth, & a great demonſtration of God (O bleſſed for ever) his being, and of the truth of his word, that there is a *Conſcience*, ſo ſtrange a power, which every man hath within him and over him, that forceth the ſoul to a reflection on its ſelf even when it trembles at that ſight, and with an awful ſound tells the Atheiſt there is a God, when he ſeems to have no fear or conviction thereof; this is that great tormenter and troubler of the World, from which there is no retreat, though one ſhould flee to the uttermoſt parts of the earth, this keeps a high court of juſtice under the authority of the great Judge, and there without reſpect of perſons do's ſummond great and ſmall, do's arreaſt, bring in witneſs, ſentences, yea, in ſome meaſure, puts that in execution, and can make hell begin there, by an unexpreſſible anguish and horrour: It is ſtrange that ſuch a thing when it is ſo undeniable do's not ſtare the World in the face with more amazement, bnt I ſhall further offer ſome few evidences of this truth beſides theſe already mentioned.

1. Could there be ſuch a power in man to difference betwixt that good and evil which is within him, if there were not alſo ſome higher power above him, who hath thus form'd him, with ſuch principles? Yea, could there be a judging and witneſſing within a man, if there were not a law and rule over him: for it is ſure the conſcience in all its actings hath reſpect to a higher judgment and to a law, which even natures light, though very dim, holds forth, but is expreſs and clear in the Scripture which is that great rule of the conſcience. 2. Is it not very ſtrange

to

to see such a power within a man, and yet against him, that the grossest Atheist is an enemy to it, yet cannot be without it, or get it shaken off, and whilst it is known how strong a byass, and inclination these have to evil, more then good, they are yet forced to justify the one more then the other, the drunkard cannot drown this conviction, nor the worldling burie it in the earth, where his treasure lies. 3. Though men may come some length to divert the conscience and silence it, that it cannot exerce its function, without some special divine excitation, yet is it not manifest how then when once it is awaked, there is no possible withstanding, then the stout hearted cannot keep his ground to debate with it; yea, when they run it follows with as swift a pace, no skill, no arguments can defend from its force, no violence against such a power, but whilst in the convoy of sin, they overreach the witnes of men, lo this is continually at hand to tell them, that he who is greater then the conscience, do's regard. 4. Can any thing be more real & certain, then these effects of the conscience, I mean that trouble and fear men have in sinning, and that peace and satisfaction that attends well doing? Do you know such a place of the earth whither this power hath not some place to overaw men, even without any visible aw or hazard; and can all mankinde, through the whole World, in all ages be in so strange a delusion, if there were no real ground for it. 5. How convincingly do's this witnes there is a conscience, and the reality of it, that men are at so much work to bribe it, to frame diversions thereto, yea, to finde out false grounds of peace, and some such gloss and commentary, as may reconcile the rule with their grossest actings and exorbitancies, and why is

this, but that in outdaring it, they finde it stronger then they, and therefore must counterwork, by darkening that great light and finde out some shew of reason to silence conscience, and promise peace to themselves, though they walk in the wickednes of their heart. 6. Do not these strange extreams, which oft are obvious in mens condition, witnes the reality of this power? O what a marvelous thing to see one stupide this day, and desperat the next, the conscience breaking up, at that rate, that to be rid thereof and its torment, the poor man would seek a shelter in the grave; yea, is it not usual to see some wear out their time as beasts, yet at dying seased with an inexpressible horrour of God? is not this something wakened, which was formerly aslee? 7. Do not men see such desperat acts of wickednes in the World, such furious running over warnings and convictions, that may even convincingly shew some pursute of the conscience, and that horride way they take to be rid of it by revenge, to give it a further wound and silence its noyse, by some violent deep stroke. 8. Are not these sudden unlooked for outbreakings of the conscience most remarkable, how it takes some unawars, and grows upon them the more they strive with it; it is known also, what reflections men usually have on themselves and their actions, in some present exigent and hazard; yea, how they are thus affrighted, or in some measure quiet, as they are put to condemne or acquite themselves on that score: Now is not this a convincing witness of the force of a natural conscience, and likewise that usual recourse which the grosest of men will in such an extremity have to God by prayer, do's both declare this, and that impression they have upon them of a Deity. 9. How marvelous

velous a confidence and support do's the conscience afford where it is a friend, under the greatest misery and trouble from without, for thus a mans spirit can sustain its infirmities, but O when it is an adversary nothing, nothing so unsupportable, it will torment and tear one within when there is none without dare provok him; yea, cause the oppressour tremble, whilst it upholds the oppressed with confidence, it makes the one eat his bread with joy, when it imbitters the pleasant morsels of others. (¶)

SEVENTH That there is a reward for the righteous and unquestionable gain in Godlines, is a piece of the Scripture not onely well known, and witnessed to the observing Christian in his experience, but is also held forth in every age, as in great letters to the view of the world *Ps.*58: *ver.* 11. *Ps.* 97: *ver.* 11. *Is.* 3: *ver.* 10. It is true that the Christians lot is oft followed with much trouble, and sometimes with loss of his life, which may seem to have a very dismal aspect: for that great goodnes which the man who feareth God hath ensured to him, is much laid up in another world; but it is also sure that there are such notour convincing proofes of this truth held forth even to the observation of men, by which the Lord hath in every age confirmed the same, that I am sure the greatest Atheist cannot answer even these

1. That this is the very dictate of a natural conscience not onely that God is, but that he is a rewarder of such as serve him, yea, none amongst men are so grosse, or bruttish who are not in some measure principled to difference betwixt good, and evil, with some fear of a punishment to the one, and some hope of recompence to the other, and are also forced

to notice ſome more ſignal and convincing examples, which have been of that kinde in their time.

2. Muſt we not ſay, yea, doth not the World ſee, in every age, that hiſtory of Joſeph in ſome part acted over again? Sure there have not been wanting many ſuch remarkable inſtances, wherein it might be eaſy to trace an upright & ſtraight walk through a very maze & labyrinth of changes, & to show how that hath been their condition, & at laſt integrity hath brought them to land in a comfortable harbour, yea how often they have had a marvellous, unlooked for outgate, contrary to all humane appearance, this indeed is no romance, but a moſt true hiſtory which through all times, and many examples, might be be written of the Word and providence, which ſhould ſurpaſſe the richeſt fancy that any fiction, or romance did ever contain.

3. Muſt it not be convincing, even to the worſt of men, what a viſible bleſſing doth oft follow the mean lot of ſome of the Saints, which can make their little reach far, and cauſe them abound more in their poverty then others amidſt their aboundance, which I think the world cannot shun to obſerve and gather that there is, ſure, ſomethiug elſe then mens own care, which doth their buſines; and how that ordinary proverb falleth not to the ground, that it is better to be happy then wiſe, when they ſee a ſecret judgment blow upon ſome mens eſtate that no meanes can prevent, and a ſecret bleſſing which maketh things proſper, and take effect, accompany the Chriſtians little, ſo as it may be eaſy for ſuch who looke abroad to ſee where real contentement with chearfulnes, & giving of thanks, uſeth to dwel.

4. May not the world ſee there is a feaſt in a good conſcience how litle ſoever they partake of the World,

World, that well doing, and the practiſe of godlineſs hath ſome preſent reward in its hand; whereas ſo remarkable a difference may be diſcerned betwixt the countenance, and carriage of ſuch, and of them who truſt in falſehood, that ſurely in a time of ſtrait, theſe have another kinde of ſecurity, and confidence, when greateſt naturall ſpirits fail, yea, that theſe alone, can enjoy themſelves, have the moſt calm and compoſed ſpirits, amidſt the ſeveral changes of their life, that according to outward things, their peace doth not ebb, nor flow, but they are at a ſeen advantage above others in the day when men are ſore outwitted with their ſtraites, ſo as it will be moſt eaſy then to ſee the good and advantage of religion, when the vanity of other advantages, is moſt diſcernable.

5. Is it not alſo ſeen that true honour doth truely wait on humility, and followeth ſuch, but it fleeth from them who doe moſt purſue it, yea, that faithfulnes and an upright walk will gain credit even amongſt her enemies, and reſpect before the World.

6. That theſe who are faithful in their life, and diligent improvers of a ſmall talent, have uſually more added with ſome diſcernable growth following the ſame, and as the drying up of the parts of ſome, as a judgement on unfaithfulnes, is oft obvious, ſo alſo ſuch a bleſſing upon ſerious diligence, as hath made the laſt firſt, and even outrun ſuch who were once before them; yea, it is truely ſeen how grace helpeth mens gifts, doth raiſe, and ſublimat their ſpirits, above that which once they were.

7. Doth not the Lord put ſome viſible difference oft, betwixt the righteous, and the wicked in a time of common calamity? that a ſtrange outgate with the concurrence of very marvellous providences, doth

ſomtime tryſt ſuch even to the conviction of onlookers which may tell the World, ſuch have had an inviſible hedge of preſervation about them, and have been under ſome better care, then their own.

2. What a clear witneſs doe ungodly men oft bear to this truth, at their death, or at ſome other ſtrait, ſo that their conſcience hath forced them to juſtify the godly mens choice, and to ſay that the lot of ſuch is onely moſt deſireable, yea, with much bitternes to lament their folly that made not religion more their buſineſs, the good and advantage whereof is now no matter of debate; ſure the World will confeſſe how oft the confeſſion, and teſtimony of ſuch men, to this truth, hath reached their ear.

9. I ſhall but adde, that which is ſo very manifeſt, how faithfulnes, aud integrity doth tranſmit mens name with more honour, yea, maketh it have a ſweeter ſavour in their generations, then either riches, or outward preferment; yea, that there is a great difference betwixt the memorial of the righteous, and the wicked even to the conviction of the world.

EIGHT. *That verily there is a God who judgeth in the earth*, *Pſ.* 58: *ver.* 11. who doth render unto men vengeance, and doth purſue the tranſgreſſour becauſe of ſin, is a truth which the world hath in every age by many convincing inſtances held forth to them, where they may ſee the Scripture clearly verifyed.

I have a litle touched this in the ſecond Argument how the accomplishing of Scripture threatnings is witneſſed to the obſervation of the Church, and to theſe who are wiſe to diſcern the times wherein they live; I ſhall here point at this truth, as it is in the

the providence of God, written in such great letters, as are obvious to the view of the World, so as most common onlookers cannot passe this without a remark; it is true much may be laid over to that great general assize of the last judgement, that day of retribution; yea, sometimes we see the most wicked and vile, go in peace to the grave; the soveraignity of God doth also appear very observably, in the different measure, and kind of punishment; and it is too evident how prone men are to look more to the interest that second causes have in such a thing, then to a divine hand; but this is also sure that the Lord is known on the earth, by the judgement which he executeth, and in every age doth set up such convincing examples before men, that the greatest atheist may see, yea, oft their conscience must break the jayle, restrain it as they will, and force this acknowledgement, that such judgements can be no casual thing; while something of a power higher then man, and a clear verifying of the word is so discernable therein.

Now to demonstrat this truth I would offer some things which may shew how very near this cometh to the observation of men, so as none can be a stranger thereto, or want conviction of this piece of the truth of God, except they willingly shut their eyes, while it is clear.

1. That the very Heathens who never knew the Scripture, nor a writen Law, have yet so much of a natural conscience that not only they can put some difference between vertue, and vice, but even in some measure can discern Gods putting some difference betwixt the same; how flagitious crimes use to be punished by a divine hand, we may say, time could never yet wear out the observation of this truth, through the World, and though many things may be recei-

received, and credited, which not having a ſure ground do quickly evaniſh, it being truths priviledge ſtill to outlive falshood, yet, it is ſure, how in the darkeſt parts of the earth, this hath been ſtill noticed with a remark, and tranſmitted from one age to another, yea the records of the nations even by heathen writers ſhew what remarkable punishment hath followed cruel oppreſſion, Covenant breaking, and ſuch other groſſe ſins againſt the ſecond table, yea, how theſe have been the uſual forerunners of great ſtrokes on Kingdomes and families.

2. Doth not the World ſee, that in theſe remarkable judgements which have come on a nation, and People, there is ſomething higher then inſtruments, or ſecond cauſes, which may be very evident in bringing the ſame about: ſo that all who goe by muſt confeſſe, ſuch is no caſual tryſt, nor doth ariſe out of the duſt. but that ſurely a divine hand is there; and truely though ſome deſolating ſtrokes, are very terrible in themſelves, and blood, and ruines should be no matter of pleaſure, yet, whereas, thereby that ſtately ſound is heard, even his voice who maketh the earth to tremble, and God is made known to the ſons of men, we should not only with fear, but even ſome holy congratulation conſider his work; now to clear what a convincing witneſs theſe are to this truth, I ſhall point at ſome very obvious remarks, which I am ſure the World cannot contradict of the Lords own immediat hand in ſuch judgments. 1. That ſtrange concurrence and tryſt of providence which uſeth to appear when God is againſt a People, how all things will then conſpire, as a fatal conjunction to work their woe, and ruine, that men may ſee, ſurely this is from the Lord, who is wonderful in counſel, & from a hand againſt which there is no ſtriving.

2. How

2. How ſuch remarkable ſtrokes are ſeen to tryſt with ſome great, and remarkable height of ſin in ſuch a nation, and People, ſo that it is eaſy then for all onlookers to conſeſſe the righteouſnes of God therein. 3. When judgement is coming on a land it may appear how inſtruments are raiſed, and in a more then ordinary way acted with all advantages for ſuch a piece of ſervice. 4. There is a viſible blaſting then both of counſel, and ſtrength, and theſe meanes which otherwayes looked moſt probable; how remarkably ſuch are confounded even in the uſe of their ordinary abilities, their heart and uſual courage taken from them while the Lord is on a work of judgement. 5. That aſtoniſhing ſucceſſe which is uſually ſeen to follow theſe whom the Lord ſendeth forth to execut his judgement, how then they move ſwiftly, & with vigour, they doe not ſtumble, or weary, it is neither rivers, nor walled cities can ſtand in their way; mountaines are made vallies to ſhew it is the Lord whoſe hand in that day is ſtrong upon them, to ſtrengthen their loins, and make the ſword, and axe ſharp for his ſervice. 6. Amidſt theſe various ſtrokes which come on a land, can men paſſe that of the *Peſtilence* without ſome ſpecial note, where Gods immediat hand, ſomething ſupernatural above ordinary or natural cauſes may be clearly ſeen, both in its ſtrange progreſſe in ſpreading, which like a lightning doth oft go through cities and countreys in a ſmall time; do not theſe tell aloud to the World that they come not unſent, and without ſome ſpecial commiſſion; and that there is no ſtriving againſt them, nor are ordinary meanes effectual in ſome ſuch extraordinary plagues until he who brought it on, do alſo by his own hand take it off.

3. It is very obvious even to the world that clear reſemblance which is oft betwixt ſin, and the ſtroke,

ſtroke, how holy juſtice doth keep a proportion; and doth ſhape out the judgement ſo exactly both meaſure, and kind, that it may be eaſy to ſee the ſtroke pointing, as with an hand, to the cauſe, by its diſcernable likenes, and both at the righteous judgment of God which thus meaſured out to men, as they have dealt with others: We ſee how the Lord tryſted Agag, and Adonibezek, how Sodoms burning luſt was puniſht with fire from Heaven. yea what even David had meaſured out for his murther, and adultery, the ſword ſhall not depart from his houſe, and for the other his wives by his own ſon abuſed, and truely every ages obſervation can witneſs this truth from many convincing examples, that there is a God who judgeth in the earth, it being oft ſeen if men would ſeriouſly obſerve. 1. How an univerſal overſpreading of ſin in a land, hath uſually ſome national, and univerſal ſtroke following. 2. That blood waiteth on bloody men, and ſuffereth them not oft to live out half their dayes; one oppreſſour punished by another, the unmerciful man payed home in his own coyn, by ſuch as ſhall ſhew as little mercy to him, or his. 3. How the proud, and inſolent who do moſt hunt after outward glory, are uſually tryſted with ſome humbling abaſing ſtroke, he powreth contempt on Princes, and ſuch who will not honour God ſhall not brook that honour they ſeek from men. 4. That ſuch who have been moſt given up to uncleannes are oft ſeen not to encreaſe as to their poſterity, but their iſſue obſervably made to faile, yea by a divine hand rooted out, ſure many ſuch ſignal examples might be inſtanced. 5. How ſuch who have chooſed ſin to ſhun trouble, and ſuffering, have in their ſinful way got as large a meaſure thereof, as that man who in Q. *Maryes* time ſaid, he could not burn for the truth, and

and therefore forsook it, by an unseen hand had both himselfe, and his house in one night burnt. 6. That the treacherous, and deceitful men are thus dealt with by others, yea, children who have been undutiful to their parents, have from theirs met with the same recompence. 5. That whilest men to make a purchase have even denyed themselves the necessary use of outward things, are oft seen to leave their estate to such, who do quickly wast and scatter the same, and thus the sinful parsimony of parents punished with the prodigality of such who succeed them. 8. That the frequent use of some dreadful imprecations is oft punished by the Lord with a sutable stroke to the conviction both of themselves, and onlookers. 9. How such as have joyned together, and united themselves against the truth have been visibly broken as to their own privat interest, and truely we must say there is oft such a tryst of very convincing circumstances, in some acts of the judgement of God, with such a resemblance to the sin, yea, judgement sometime pursueing men in the very place, where the sin hath been acted that it may be easy for all who go by to say, there is indeed a God who judgeth in the earth.

4. Doth it not appear, how very convincing and obvious this truth is even to the World, from these ordinary remarkes, and proverbial sayings which we find in all ages, and in every part of the earth, even the most rude, and ignorant have had, of the judgment of God; for truely what else are these but an expresse witness, how universally this truth is known, and received by men, how much the World is convinced thereof, through a long tract of observation from the fathers to the children, yea, thence they have had a divinity of their own, drawen out thereof, how such sins do not use to passe without some

ſome notour punishment. Now I would but name ſome few of theſe remarkes, that have been moſt uſual in all times. 1. How ſome families have not thriven, but a ſecret judgement hath been diſcernable thereon ſince they had hand in ſome groſſe acts of wickedneſſe, ſuch as bloodshed, their former proſperity from ſuch a day viſibly declining. 2. How that an evil purchaſe uſeth not be of long continuance, but their eſtate oft in a very ſtrange, and unſenſible way made to evanish, which their children though frugal can by no meanes keep up, and the cauſe hereof, men doe eaſily point at, it was purchaſed by fraud tranſmitted with a curſe cleaving thereto, and ſo there was no warding of the judgement of God. 3. Such who doe not much conſider Gods controverſy, yet are oft forced to remark that ſince ſome have medled, or matched with ſuch an houſe, they have ſadly ſmarted thereby, ſomething of a curſe even following the race, and poſterity of ſome. 4. How ſacrilegious medling with that which hath been for a pious, and publick uſe hath cauſed a viſible waſt and conſumption in their own eſtate. 5. That mens asking counſel from the Devil, and turning to that airth for their help, doth uſually reſolve in a ſad, and tragick cloſe, and truly this, many in the ſhutting up of their life have been forced to confeſſe. 6. That falshood doth not uſe to keep its feet, nor a wicked way long proſper, what ever it ſeem to the firſt view, yea, I may addeas one of the Worlds remarks which they cannot well shun, that which ſeemeth was an ordinary ſaying in the time of Eſter, that it is not ſafe troubling the Church, or for men to ſtate themſelves in oppoſition to that party, and I dare not queſtion, but this ſhall be yet as convincing, and obvious to the World as it hath been in any former ages.

I. Is

5. Is not the appearance of a divine hand oft very obvious to the World in the discovery of sin, and bringing to light some grosse acts of wickednes, even in extraordinary way, while it seen. 1. By what strange unexpected meanes, these have been brought forth, such an astonishing tryst, and concurrence of things therein as hath forced not only onlookers, to some special remark, but hath even struck the guilty party through the heart with wonder, and conviction of the same. 2. How the hand of Justice pursuing men for some notour, and known crime, doth oft bring to light some that have been most secret, which they thought the World could never reach, yea, it may be frequently seen while men have been in one sin found out, it hath also brought forth the discovery of some other, and forced them to confesse, that it was a righteous judgement pursuing them for the same. It is a thing also known, yea, by many undenyable instances witnessed, that marvellous discovery of concealed murther, by the bleeding of the body upon the touch of the murtherer. I confesse it should be hard to assert the lawful, and warrantable practice of such an appeal to so extraordinary, and stupendious a sign from the Lord, where Scripture goeth not clearly before us, but on the other hand, such a thing so surely tryed for such an end, and in the case where all ordinary meanes of discovery have been wanting, I think calleth us to a serious remark thereof, while it so visiby seemeth to witness his hand, who doth make inquisition for blood.

6. Is not the dreadful consternation, these tormenting feares which men after some grosse acts of wickednesse do bewray, a very obvious witness to this truth, that there is a God who judgeth on the earth, in whose hands it is a terrible thing to fall; and she-

weth how great a punishment wickednes is to its ſelf, truely if Atheiſts turn not brutish, and ſtupid, they muſt notice this, and confeſſe a thing which doth ſo oft reach their eares, what have been the horrid cryes of many dying men who have moſt ſported with ſin in their life; that may tell byſtanders there is a judge who can ſtretch forth his hand on the ſoul, and conſcience, whereto no rack, or outward torments is any way comparable.

7. I would further adde theſe extraordinary ſigns, and prodigies which do uſually go before ſome ſtroke and judgement on a land, do they not clearly point at a divine hand in the ſame? For as theſe are a ſolemn forewarning from Heaven to give men an alarum, before remarkable changes, the truth whereof the World cannot deny, ſo we muſt ſay they are a convincing teſtimony, that theſe judgements are no caſual things, which the Atheiſt cannot anſwer, it being ſo clear. 1. That ſuch ſignes, and prodigies, have been in every age viſible to the Worlds experience, and the graveſt hiſtories both of auncient, and later times, do fully witnes. 2. That ſuch things ſhould alſo be previous to great revolutions in the World, we know the Scripture is moſt expreſſe, *Ioel.* 2: *ver.* 30. *Luk.* 21: *ver.* 11. And as we ſhould guard againſt any ſuperſtitious reſpect, we would alſo beware of ſtupid Atheiſtical inadvertency at theſe ſtrange works of the Lord, which call both for fear, and obſervation. 3. That ſuch have been uſually previous to great calamities, and judgements on a People, is a thing that all ages muſt witneſs, even theſe, who have been moſt cautious, and diſcerning in their time, who could not ſhun this as a remark, Herodotus doth ſet that down as a thing moſt ſure, in his ſixth Book, *cum Deus puniturus eſt gentem, & urbem*

urbem, prodigiis id Jolet significare, and Lucan could tell, what went before the Romans civil wares,

——— *Superique minaces Prodigiis terras implerunt*,

yea, it can hardly be instanced any great change, or revolution in the earth, which hath not had some such extraordinary Herald going before. 4. Can the World deny how sometimes these prodigious signes have been shaped out to point at the very nature of the stroke then imminent, by a strange resemblance to the same, such as a flaming sword in the air, the appearance of armies fighting even sometimes upon the earth, to the view of many, most sober, and judicious onlookers, also showers of blood, the noise of drummes, and such like, which are known usually to go before warr, and commotions.

NINTH That there are evil spirits, *Eph.* 6: 12 *Rev.* 20: *ver.* 2, 3. and a Diabolical power such as the Scripture hath held forth, whose constant work is the ruin, and undoing of man, is a truth not onely witnessed from that experience Christians have of their assaults, but is undenyable by the world, and greatest Atheists except they deny the discovery of sense as well as reason.

I confesse it may cause fear, and astonishment to think on this, that spirits so knowing, and once originally excellent, have fallen thus into such an height of indignation against infinit goodnesse, that it is now their only aim, and pleasure to dishonor God, and destroy his image in man, It should indeed cause us fear him that spared not the Angels who sinned. But the truth it self is sure, that such a party is at this day, encompassing the earth, and trafficking up, and down there, to prove which by arguments were to light a candle to let men see that it is day, while it is known,

what ordinary familiar converse many have therewith, and alace too easy to discern that power which the prince of this world hath upon the children of disobedience, how obvious are the marks of his conquest almost every where? Thousands lying in his chaines, how far do we see many transformed even to the very image of the Devil, which in these desperat prodigious acts of wickednes that are oft in the world may appear, such whereat we should think humane nature, though corrupt could not but tremble, yea, look on with horrour, how many in all ages have even been in an expresse covenant with them, and is not there a great part of the earth where the Devil is visibly, and audibly known where he hath a kind of neighbourhood with men? But there being no need for such a demonstration, I onely here aim to hold forth what a concerning truth this is, and of great consequence if seriously considered, yea, how both the Scripture, and Christian Religion, is hereby evidently confirmed since these things must necessarly follow.

1. That in this the Scripture is truely fullfilled which doth witnes what these Spirits are, adversaries to man, in their nature, and inclination desperatly evil, whose actings in the earth have a visible tendency to mens hurt, and ruin, yea, their pretended favours, alwayes directed to that end, whence we see such a natural inbred horrour which is in man against them.

2. That it is no common thing which they so much pursue, something more pretious then the body for which so great, and cruel an adversary is in continual labour, for their actings have no such tendency to ruin mens estate in the World; no, it is most evident this is the soul the immortal soul, to undoe them in

in that great intereſt, which is the mark whereat they level, that poor man might be sharer of that miſery under which they are concluded.

3. Is it not an undenyable conſequence of this truth that there muſt be an inviſible World that hath inhabitants of another kinde then ſuch as are here, that ſure there is ſome being above man, yea a real correſpondence betwixt men, and Spirits, and should not man thus placed in a midle eſtate betwixt the Angels and the beaſts here below partaking in his body with the one, but in his reaſonable ſoul with the other thence raiſe himſelfe to thoughts of ſome more excellent condition for which he is framed, then a ſenſual life, and that ſurely the ſoul hath an intereſt in an other world which he should moſt look after?

4. Muſt not this alſo be ſure that there is an iuviſible guard, & theſe deſperat Spirits are under reſtraint by a power ſtronger then they, which can bound their malice, for, this may be certain that theſe who have ſo great enmity to man, are ſo near, and have ſuch advantages over us could not keep at ſuch a diſtance, but that they are kept in chaines by a higher power.

5. How is it that now by the Goſpel and within this precinct of the Church, Sathans power is ſo much reſtrained in reſpect of former times, while it is known what a familiar converſe they had with men, did even haunt their houſes and were ſo publick in their appearance under ſuch names of *Faires*, and *Brounies* which ſince the breaking up of the light of the Goſpel hath not been, yea hath not the Devil to this day an open throne and dominion in theſe parts of the earth where Chriſt is not worshiped; it is alſo known, how the oracles of old did ceaſe, and that publick worship which the world for many ages had given them,

with the very time of Christs appearance, & breaking up of the Gospel these night beasts getting to their dennes, when once the day was broke up. Plutarch and other heathen writers are a witnes to this.

6. Whence is it that within the Church where Sathan is most restrained, yet there he doth more stur then in all the world besids? Doth it not shew that that is the party with which he is at war, hence doth he more rage, the more clear the light shineth, yea, is there not seen something, besids mens natural enemity at the truth, even a fury, and violence wherewith some are visibly driven in their actings with such an unsatiable cruelty against the followers of Christ, without the least shadow of provocation as holds forth a vive resemblance of the Devil, and some violent pressure, and incitement from that auth.

7. Is it not sure that there is such a party, by this, that he is an adversary to God, and holines, for which he doth so impetuously tempt, and presse men to the outward acts of sin, yea, that there is a Spirit of blasphemy which so visibly rageth in the world, and acts men to war against Heaven with their tongues by cursing, and blasphemous oathes which hath no carnal pleasure or gain, but yet, can not forbear, from a violent incitement which may be seen swaying to the same.

8. Whence is it which is so very known and notour that these horrid wretches who give themselves to the Devil cannot enter in any formal engadgement without renouncing Christ, and their baptisme, doth it not shew that direct oppolition he stands in to Christ, yea to the very name and shadow of Christianity?

9. Whence is it that even the grosseſt Atheists upon any appearance of the Devil, or apprehension from that

that airth will not then make ſcorn of prayer, but turns in earneſt to that, which at other times they mocked. O doth it not ſhew mens Atheiſm is their judgement, that not onely there is a dreadful horrour, and fear which by nature men have of theſe evil Spirits, but ſome inbred ſenſe alſo, and impreſſion of a Deity, which doth bewray it ſelf whither they will, or not, in a preſſing ſtrait, and extremity.

TENTH. That there is ſuch an enmity betwixt the ſeed of the woman, and the Serpent as the Scripture hath held forth is very manifeſt, a truth wherein the world may ſee the Scripture clearly verifyed. *Gal. 4: ver. 29.*

It is truely ſtrange that this putteth not men to more ſerious thoughts, to purſue ſuch a thing to its true riſe, what ſhould cauſe ſuch a violent, & unreaſonable contrariety againſt the way, and followers of God; for here upon grave reflections they muſt needs ſee that their way in this is a convincing witnes to the truth of the Scripture, which might put them in ſome other humor, yea, help to turn this poiſon into an antidot againſt it ſelf, but this is ſure, and undenyable, the diſcovery whereof cannot but ſtare the greateſt Atheiſt in the face, from theſe convincing evidences.

1. That it is ſeen no privat quarrel which ever was among men hath been with ſuch vigour, and malice purſued as this upon the account of religion, which hath ſtill put the World more in a flame, then any privat intereſt, yea, it is very manifeſt how men are carried with the ſpaite of their own natural inclination, to oppoſe the Church, and People of God.

2. That this feed, and enmity could never be taken up through all the successions of time, a strife which is not late begun, to be seen only in one age, betwixt the children of the bond woman, and of the free, no, the most sage, and wise amongst men the greatest Peace-makers, could yet never fall on a way to reconcile these two parties, but the children have still served themselves heirs to the quarrel, and harred of their fathers against the Church.

3. Is it not seen that these who are more civil, and can hold a little up with the form of religion, yet, will break forth in greatest rage against the power thereof when once it begins to appear? it is indeed here, that imbred contrariety which is in men against holines, doth bewray it selfe, even, in these who are otherwayes noted for a calm, and peaceable disposition; while once they begin to be scorcht with its heat.

4. What strong natural antipathy is this which causeth men pursue with so much bitternes these from whom they never had any personal injury? sure their conscience must oft tell that they have no reason, or any other provocation then what is from the appearance of the image of God in such, but this is their nature and disposition, an enmity which they can no more help, then they can change their nature, or the Leopard can change its spots.

5. From what a strong inclination, and inward principle doth the World thus act in its opposition to the Church and followers of God? whilest it is clear, though these were never so quiet and peaceable, yet their enemies are still restlesse, and cannot sleep beside them.

6. It is seen how this doth separat betwixt neerest friends, and relations, and alienat such who have some-

ſometimes been moſt dear to other, no bond in nature ſo ſtrait which it will not break, it doth oft ſet the husband againſt the wife and the parents againſt the children, yea, when religion once breaks up in a corner of a land or a family, doth it not then make a viſible jarr, and put all in a flame?

7. It is clear that when once grace appeareth in men they are as a ſign, and wonder to a profane generation, the World doth then ſenſibly change her countenance, and looketh like a ſtep-mother; while on the other hand it is clear that profeſſours turning looſe and running to that exceſſe of riot with others, will cauſe their old adverſaries warm towards them, and alace, proveth the ſureſt way to gain mens friendship while the World thinks, they are their own, when once they turn profane.

ELEVENTH. That the Creature is made ſubject to vanity becauſe of ſin, which not onely the wiſeſt of men but the Spirit of God, doth witnes that things here beneath the ſun, are indeed vanity, and vexation of ſpirit, *Rom.* 8: *ver.* 20. *Eccleſ.* 2: *ver.* 11. is a piece of the Scripture in ſuch great letters written forth to the view of men, that none can be ſtrangers thereto.

It is true the cauſe, and ſolid remedy of this ſo general a complaint, is only reached by the Godly man, who knoweth how to read the vanity of the creature, as a piece of the fulfilling of the word, and doth ſeriouſly conſider things as they are and not as they appear, but it is alſo ſure, that in every age through the various changes of mans life this is ſo clearly witneſſed, that the moſt groſſe, and brutish, cannot ſhift the conviction thereof, but in one of theſe two

times have been forced to a publick acknowledging of the ſame, at death, when they are leaving the World, or in a day of ſtrait when the World is leaving them, now to demonſtrat this I ſhall here but offer theſe few queries.

1. Have not the greateſt inſtances of the glory of the World, been uſually the greateſt examples of its vanity, and change? How few hath ambition raiſed, but it hath alſo ruined, yea given the ſoreſt fall to theſe it had lifted moſt high? What ſudden changes do attend great men, and high places, which theſe who ſit low do eſcape, ſure if the tragedies of Princes, and ſuch who in their condition have been raiſed above others were put by themſelves in record, it ſhould make a great volumn, and ſhew how their glory, and proſperous eſtate did only make their fall the more obſervable.

2. Is it not obvious what a fraile dying diſpoſition is in all worldly things, that even the greateſt Kingdoms, and politick bodies, to maintain which neither policy, nor ſtrength was wanting, yet like natural bodies of men had their inevitable periods, their youth, and flowriſhing times, their declining, and old age, and at laſt even brought to their grave; hath not the glory of greateſt Empires, and Monarchies ſunk in the duſt? yea, ſcarce a heap of ſtones left this day to tell us where once famous cities have ſtood, *Nunc Seges eſt ubi Troja fuit*, the ruines whereof, and ſuch excellent pieces of the World doth clearly ſhew that certain diſſolution of the whole fabrick at laſt.

3. What a ſmall diſtance we may ſee betwixt extremities in outward things, even greateſt plenty, and poverty, the higheſt place, and a low condition

tion, ſo that the morning hath ſeen ſome happy, and flowriſhing in the World whom the evening hath ſeen miſerable, and in a moſt ſhort time, ſuch who have been objects of envy, and admiration, made the object of mens contempt, and pity, yea, have ſo ſuddenly diſappeared, have ſunk into ſo little bounds, that men have been put narrowly to conſider them, and with admiration ask, are theſe they who were once a terrour in the land of the living, and their place hath not been found who a few dayes before ſeemed to place themſelves alone in the midſt of the earth?

4. What elſe is it but the very preſent moment of time that maketh ſuch a difference betwixt the rich and poor, ſince as to what is paſt, and the bygone time mens happines, and miſery may be reckoned as though it had never been, *Nam quicquid retro eſt mors tenet*, and who but a fool would boaſt of that which is to come, a thing ſo uncertain? this onely is ſure that a few dayes will make all conditions equal, when the bones of the rich, and the duſt of greateſt Princes will not be diſcernable from theſe of the poor man.

5. Is there any thing ſo pleaſant which hath not a worm at the root thereof, a moth which naturally breeds in the moſt ſatisfying enjoyments that quickly eats out the heart thereof, and blaſts their hope before the harveſt? How oft is greateſt longing in the purſuit of things turned to loathing, and wearineſs when obtained, becauſe it is not the nature of the thing ſo much as an humor, and the novelty thereof that maketh them pleaſant, hence many ſenſual men have turned Monaſtick, and greateſt Monarches become melancholy, yea, how uſual is it for many

to

to ſurvive their pleaſures, and bury their joy, and delights in the World even before themſelves, while nothing remaines of all their former enjoyments but ſome ſad ſighs, & groanes with a heavy fairwell.

6. Is it not found that riches, and aboundance of the earth doth load more then it fils, and mens wealth only further heighten their wants? How very poor are ſome amidſt their fulnes, more then theſe who earn their bread with ſore labour, whom the world doth wholly poſſeſſe, while they do not all poſſeſſe it, neither is it in their power to make uſe of that they have, yea, are they not ſick and dy in Princes courts, as well as in the meaneſt cottage, and the complaints of the great, and rich uſually moe then theſe of the poor? Sure it is known that the great man doth oftner want a ſtomack, and reſt, then the poor want meat and a bed to ly in.

7. In what an endleſſe circle do voluptuous men move, from one thing to another in a perpetual ſearch after other enjoyments to ſatisfy their ſpirits? which sheweth what a great want is there, which ſtill cals for variety of things, and ſome fresh ſupply, to take off the wearineſſe of one pleaſure by another, elſe the delight they have therein would quickly languish and wear out; yea is it not ſtill found that the beſt of outward things are not on a near approach what they ſeemed to be at a diſtance, the eye not ſatisfyed with ſeeing, nor the ear with hearing, but the more they are preſſed the leſſe they yeeld, neither do they enjoy ſuch things with moſt ſatisfaction who take a full draught, who wallow, and ſteep themſelves in their enjoyments, being more in expectation then in poſſeſſion, ſo that ſometime mens attaining their deſire hath cauſed their delight, and pleaſure in theſe things ceaſe.

8. It

8. It is also clear that outward things are incident to the worst without making them the better, and separable from the best without making them the worse, and what can silver, or gold sute an immortal soul, or answer such a capacity, more then vertue, and godlines could answer to fill an empty chest, or glasse botle?

9. How rare is it for men to get their lot in the World brought up to their desire? But are still at some jar with their present condition, so that oft there needs no more to turn men discontent, but the thought of some lot, which they apprehend more satisfying then their own, the want whereof turns them more disquiet then all their enjoyments are pleasing, yea, it is also evident many mens labour, and disquiet doth increase with their wealth, and turns the flame more violent, and that even in the condition of the poor there is something the great man is made to envy, while the poor may find cause oftimes to pity, and compassionat some great men in the midst of their prosperous estate.

10. What is the enjoying of the best of the earth, but its very passing away, while it perisheth in the present use? And what? Are not men going through the World and leaving it behind them in the midst of their most satisfying enjoyments? is not the excellency of most outward things onely according to opinion, or the institution of men while they have but small intrinsick worth from their own quality; in some parts of the earth, whitnesse is reckoned deformity, and the blackest collour the greatest beauty, and therefore they paint the Devil white? what a poor smoke is swelling titles of honour if soberly weighed? while the proud mans happines, doth some way hang upon the poor who goe by, which they

they must beg from others with the greatest artifice; and would the choicest jewels, or a bag of gold laid upon the heart of a dying man, any way quiet his spirit, or ease his pain? Surely this is vanity.

11. Is it not oft seen amidst the various changes of the earth, Princes and great men walking on foot, and servants riding on horsback, the Children oft put to ask an almes from such who have served their fathers? fooles loaded with wealth, and great stiles, while men of the choicest spirit, are buried under contempt, and poverty, yea doe we not see how quickly men are cryed up, and down in the World? That which in one age is raised, is oft rased in an other, yea, many at much labour to undoe that which others have done with greatest care, and expence, what a sore vanity is this?

12. Will not the want of a very small thing oft embitter the pleasantest lot, and turn it into wormwood, and gall? the smallest touch of pain, the gravel, or took-ake, yea, even some melancholy thought will make men disrelish all their present enjoyments, what torment doth a small ruffle, and affront oft prove to the proud man even in the midst of his glory? is it not also found, how carnal mirth, and joy, men wallowing in the delights of the World, hath still in the close a bitter sting & harsh waygate, which as the shadow attends the body, is the native, & unseparable consequent thereof, and surely that may be easy to discern, there is no condition, which can want a crosse or some mixture of discontent, even where there is least seen cause.

I would adde which cannot want a remark in every time, that while men seem to be at the top, and furtheſt period of their thoughts, and projects, have things according to their desire brought to some happy

py close, they are oft then upon some turn, and change in their condition, either by death or some very sad crosse, and even in that day their thoughts have perished, truely such as are wise observers of the World, and of the course of things therein may oft see, how usual a tryst this is that when there is too bright a sun-blinck in outward prosperity, if great sobriety and moderation do not accompany the same it is an ominous, and fatal presage of a storm, and *ad summum, quicquid venit, ad exitium prope est.*

TWELFTH. There is this truth, which hath in all ages been cleerly witnessed, even to the conviction of the World, *that the end of the upright man is peace,* & integrity what ever rub it may seem to have by the way, yet, hath a sweet and comfortable close, *Psal.* 37. 37.

This is an undenyable truth not only because the saints are then entring into perfect peace, but it is also clear that how ever the godly man may have very sharp assaults in the close of his dayes, and some who have shined very bright do set in a dark cloud, their evening full of sorrow, and bitternes, yea, their reflexion on some sad slip which they have made by the way, bearing them company even to the the grave, yet, this truth is still verifyed, yea, may be discernable to the conviction of bystanders, that integrity, and an upright walk hath much peace in the end, and doth land men upon a comfortable harbour, anent which I can appeal the World, and the most ordinary onlookers if this hath not been oft very convincing, and discernable to them, from many instances of the Lords usual way with these who have been faithful in their generation at their death, from that testimony which they have then given to this, yea,

from

from moſt viſible ſignes and evidences hereof even upon their countenance, and carriage whileſt it is ſeen.

1. How great an advantage ſuch uſe to have above others, when Death approacheth, ſo that it hath not been Balaams wish alone to dy the death of the righteous and to have his latter end like theirs, but the worſt of men are ſtill forced to witneſſe their reſpect to the lot of a dying Chriſtian, and would wish a share thereof when it coms to their turn, anent which I may ask the greateſt mockers at Religion, and at the life of a Godly man, if they can poſſibly shun this conviction, that ſurely ſuch are of the beſt eſtate, and at the greateſt advantage, in their end.

2. This I am ſure cannnt be hid from the World what aboundant peace the ſaints do then teſtify in their choice, what a preſent unſpeakable complacency they have with this that they valued Chriſt above all other advantages, did choſe affliction rather then ſin, and now while they are turning their face to the wall, finds the witnes of a good conſcience, and of Gods approbation ſo ſweet a feaſt, that their joy, and peace on this account, they can not ſmother or keep in but declare to all who ſtand by what they find, and truely it hath been oft ſeen, how the inward joy which ſome of theſe have had hath exceeded their outward pain, been more ſenſible to them then their ſickneſſe, yea, have been in leaving the World much more chearful then theſe whom they left behind.

3. It is alſo known, and may be verv obvious to byſtanders, how with a ſweet compoſure, and recumbency of ſoul ſuch have laid themſelves upon the promiſe, in that houre, while they were grapling with

with the king of terrours, their ſpirit then quiet, and calm, having taken the truth, and teſtimony of God for their ſhield, and buckler, which may tell the World what an other kinde of ſecurity, and confidence theſe have beyond others, yea, that ſurely the ground on which this confidence is founded, muſt be a thing that is able to bear out the greateſt ſtorm, and aſſault, and is ſomething above nature.

4. Is it not clear that even an untimely, and violent death, could not let, or fruſtrat that peace which integrity cauſeth in the cloſe? For innumerable inſtances can witnes what marvellous joy, and ſatisfaction the Saints have ſhewed at a ſtake, and upon a ſcaffold, and thence have had more chearful going out of time, then the rich man ſtreched upon his ſoft bed, or the greateſt Monarch, amidſt all outward advantages; ſure we muſt ſay that ſweet refreshing cloſe of the upright man, hath never been more viſible, and writ in greater letters, then in ſuch a caſe,

5. What very ſad conflicts have ſome of the Saints had in their life, yea, even upon the ſetting of the ſun have been put to cry out through ſore perplexing feares, and doubts wherewith they have been aſſaulted, who have at laſt had this turned into a ſong, and ſuch a marvellous change in their caſe, as hath not been more ſenſible to themſelves, then diſcernable to all onlookers, like a ſudden calm, and ſunshin, after ſome dark ſtorm. I muſt here ask the Atheiſt, and ſuch as reckon Godlineſſe but a fancy whence ſhould ſo ſtrange, ſo ſudden, and great alteration proceed, that theſe who a little before were under ſuch horrour could have no reſt, no arguments could do their turn, doe thus witnes the aboundant peace of their ſouls

yea, which is oft seen that fervent desire wherewith some of the Saints are taken away, the very lustre of heaven being upon their countenance, how marvellous and piercing are their words, which may clearly tell that now they feel, they see, and have got some glance of that, which onlookers cannot reach, though they cannot deny an acknowledgement of this.

6. Must not the World grant, yea, the greatest enemies to godlines allow this charity that sure this peace and joy which such have witnessed at death can be no counterfeit, that there is no temptation could thus byass them to deceive others, & themselves in a matter of such high concernment, and at a time when it is expected the grossest of men would speak truth, yea, that this doth appear, while men cannot in the least charge the dying Christian with any distemper in his judgement, but while they have been most composed, stayed, and present in minde, and as to other things of their concerment, most deliberat and sober; even then they have born this witnes.

(¶) Since that peace, and joy, which integrity hath in the close of the day, when the Saints are dying is undenyable, even to the conviction of the World, I would adde something anent that great truth, *The immortality of the soul, and its subsisting after death*, to which this joy, when the Christian is finishing his course hath a special respect, and is a truth, wherein the Scriptures accomplishment, and the certainty of that blessed record, may be convincingly witnessed, and demonstrat to the World, for it is thus, (I mean by the light of the Scripture) that life and immortality is brought to light, and made known to the sons of men. I know this seems so common and uncontroverted a thing an after-being of the soul, and its

its eternal subsistence, that to say more; then the naming of it may be looked on as impertinent; But oh, how unknown a truth is it! of which there needs no more to shew the little solid perswasion men have, but that it is so usually past with so few, and these very common thoughts; it is not indeed much questioned, not because it is believed, and men are sure thereof, but because they are not in earnest about such a thing; it concerns the World to keep a distance from a through knowing of that, which would be their torment to know; and there is cause for this sad regrate within the Church, that the most great and fundamental truths, wherein our comfort is most concern'd, are usually least studied; but O should it not put us to other thoughts if we could have a serious look of this; it may truly be said the better part is so buried in the worst part, that until men are dying few lay this to heart, that their souls must live for ever, yea must once part fellowship with the body, and enter in another World, and an unknown state until the resurrection; what I intend here is only a short touch at this great truth as it is a convincing witness to the Scripture and the accomplishement thereof; anent which I would offer these three to be considered. 1. How expres and clear a testimony the Scripture gives to this. 2. On what plain and undeniable grounds of reason this truth is demonstrable to the world. 3. How great a thing it is to believe and be assuredly perswaded thereof; for it seems men rather dream then have their judgments seriously exercised, or are in earnest about such a thing.

As to the first, It is undeniable that not only the Scripture holds this forth, but that there only men have a clear, and right discoverie of it, It is indeed known, what glances the world hath had of this,

yea, what hath been write thereon, by some whose sole guide was the light of nature, in this search; But it is no less evident, how very dark and uncertain, these have been; they could not shift some conviction thereof, but it was through a dark cloud, and as some pleasant dream, they looked thereon; because they did not know its rise and original, and what the end was to which in its actings, it ought to be directed; they knew not what its after-condition could truly mean, thence with such wavering and uncertainty do they express their thoughts, I do not here mean the schools of Epicurus only, to whom the soul was but a complexion of atomes, but ye see how perplexed and uncertain both Aristotle and others of these famous ancients have shew'd themselves anent this, which speaks out more some perplex and disordered notion, which they could not ward off, then any clear and certain discovery which they had on solid grounds thereof, for they knew not the Scripture, where its original, whence it is? and whether it must return, are so clearly held forth. *Eccl.* 12: *ver.* 7. And you may further see, *Hebr.* 12: *ver.* 9. *Gen.* 2: *ver.* 7. *Luk.* 16: *ver.* 22, 23. 1 *Pet.* 3: *ver.* 9.

2. This grave testimonie, which the Scripture of God do's bear to such a truth, may be also held forth to the world from such a clear and rational demonstration, that the most brutish of men can hardly sink so far into the condition of a beast, to deny they have a never-dying soul, which will not go to the dust or inherit corruption with the body; I should be loath to borrow so much of your time, by any discourse, on a subject which by others hath been so much handled, for which there are many, many arguments, unanswerably demonstrative of this truth, both

both Phyſical and moral; yet having mentioned it I cannot altogether paſs the ſame without a touch at ſome few, that may be moſt convincing and obvious. 1. If you ſhould queſtion the being and ſubſiſtence of the ſoul after death, yow muſt alſo deny its frame, that it is a ſimple, immaterial and active ſubſtance, which hath neither quantitie nor parts, and is not compounded of any principles, and therefore can be reſolved to none. 2. Do but conſider, if the ſoul have no cauſe of corruption, and from no contraries can ſuffer oppoſition, as the body do's, through the prevalencie of heat or cold, how ſhould it then admit of a diſſolution with the body; for you know generation and corruption they are by contraries, and if you argue from any natural cauſe it muſt ſurely be one of two, which makes the ſoul partake with the body, in its decay and muldering downe; either a dependence on mater, as the ſoul of the beaſt hath, which is but a material form, or a conflict from contrary qualities, which you know helps the bodies waſting and its fall; but I think you would not ſo far contradict reaſon to alleadge any of theſe anent the ſoul of man. 3. Conſider if by theſe diſeaſes, to which the body is ſubject, the ſoul is not reached, muſt it not alſo have a diſtinct exiſtence from it, and I am ſure yow muſt grant the ſoul doth not directly ſuffer from any outward diſeaſes, but the body may be under unexpreſſible pain and anguiſh when there is a ſweet calme and ſerenity within. 4. Do's not this witneſs that the ſoul lyes not a dying with the body, nor falls with it ſince it ſuffers no decreaſe, but is found ſtrong and vigourous in its actings when the flesh is brought low, and on a viſible decay, yea, is it not at the greateſt advantage in its exercise and diſcerning, the more ſeparat from the body, and ſenſible

sible things, now, it is sure that cannot be destructive to the soul in its being, which is so subservient to it in its operation, I think these who ever observed the joy and peace of a dying Christian and the excellent frame, & composure of their soul, under a pained and languishing body, through many diseases, may clearly see this truth, and there read a lecture of the immortality of the soul. 5. Will you consider, can the soul of man, have a dependence on the body in its being, when it do's no way depend thereon in its acting and exercise, for it is sure it do's truly act, yea hath a clear ratiocination even when the body sleeps, and O do's it not prove that this soul, that is found waking when the other is asleep, must have a distinct subsistence, and live when it dies. 6. If you admit that there are Spirits and incorporeal beings, which do act without a body, and yet have a true and reall subsistence can you doubt or question, the existing of the soul, or its exercing the faculties thereof without the body, though you do not reach how this should be; and if there be indeed a converse and intercourse betwixt us and Spiritual beings, yea, a truth in fellowship with God the Father of Spirits, O may not this satisfyingly demonstrat that existence and acting of the soul, even when the body is at a distance and in the grave. 7. Consider, that which you must grant hath a dominion and præeminence over the body, by its making a rational choise of good when it is most crosse to the desire and delight of the flesh, yea cannot only determine it to endure most grievous torments, but do's oft witness a special delectation therein, must it not be something truly distinct from the body which can have a subsistence without it? Now this I am sure you will not deny that there is such a dommion over the flesh and a captiva-

ting

ting of it to the law of the minde, which the moſt ſenſual and brutiſh will not deny in many inſtances how little acquaintance ſoever they have with it themſelves. 8. Since there is a diſcoverie and knowledge of things, not only above the reach and impreſſions of ſenſe, but even contrary thereto, that men do rationally judge and aſſent to truths which truly contradicts their ſenſes, as the rotundity of the earth, which ſeems to us a plain, &c. O do's it not ſhew this ſoul in man, which can ſo far ſoar above the earth, and do's ſo far exceed the body, muſt be of a more excellent mould, and ſomething truly different from it; I ſhall but adde what means that warr and ſtrugling which to every Chriſtian is known betwixt the flesh and the Spirit, yea to every man is known betwixt him, and his natural conſcience, what means theſe reflex acts of the ſoul on its ſelf, theſe marvellous products of the underſtanding, and new diſcoveries, why are men ſo anxious and concern'd about their ſurviving name, which is a moſt poore airie accident not worth the regarding, if there were a deſtruction of the whole? what means that marvellous deportment of ſo many martyres for the truth that they ſhould ſhew ſuch a joy and ſatisfaction amidſt their torments, as though they had no bodies, the pleaſure of the ſoul ſo far overcoming the pain of the flesh? what means ſo univerſal a conſent to this truth, that theſe who hate and feare it, yet cannot be rid thereof? & I muſt alſo ask, how are the choiſe and the excellent of the earth, ſo oft crush'd, under the feet of their oppreſſours, whilſt theſe wretches do oft wallow in all ſatisfying outward delights, yea ſometimes goe hence without bands in their death, in a word, O what is it that makes ſo vaſt a difference betwixt men and beaſts, ſince theſe you

see have a sensual life, want not some natural sagacity, and have their enjoyments by the senses as well as man.

3. Let us consider how great and astonishing a truth this is; O immortalitie do men beleeve it? the souls surviving the body, and that condition wherein it will enter, and yet have so few thoughts thereof, for this is a matter of such concernment, that may turn much of our life in a continued wondering; I must say can this be believed, our having an immortal soul, which is of a more excellent nature, and inestimable value then these visible heavens, sun moon and star s, for which no less then the blood of him who was truly God could ransome from everlasting wrath, and yet we put so small a price thereon; Is it indeed believed by men whilst they are so hote in their pursute after the world, since here is a question may silence all flesh, what should it availe a man to gain, were it the whole world, when it is purchased with the losing of the soul; it is sure there is no imaginable proportion betwixt that and a piece of red earth, or betwixt a few years of time and long eternity; I remember a passage of worthy *Mr. Blair* our own countrey man, who the first time he heard *Mr. Bruce* preach, said, the fame of so great a man caused him expect some thing very extraordinary from him; but his whole Sermon did press this truth of the souls being immortal, and that it was a great thing to believe it; he confessed it did at first someway amuse him, why he dwelt so much upon so known & common a subject; but after he found it was some other thing then appears at the first looke, for which men may dispute and toss it as a notion in the schools, who never knew what it was to believe the truth thereof; and that a serious impression of it on the heart

is

is ſomething elſe then a ſwiming in the head, by ſome ordinary ſpeculation of this; O what a truth, and what aſtonishment ſhould it cauſe if men would but ſometimes goe alone and conſider. 1. What it is they have thus held out to them, and how great a change is before them, which ere many dayes muſt be in their condition, when once that ſtrange ſtep is paſſed, betwixt time and another world which they can ſtep but once. 2. That this marvelous change is truly neer; time making long ſteps, the veſſel under full ſail, which carries foreward men whether they ſleep or wake to that port; for it is ſure this cannot be long deferred, and it is very unſure, but this night thy ſoul may be required. 3. That this change muſt be in a moment, in the very twinkling of of an eye, and no interval, but a preſent entering of the ſoul into that after-ſtate, which ſhall then put the Chriſtian in the fulneſs of an inconceivable joy, in the immediat preſence of God, in the embracements of the Mediator, amongſt the angels, & ſpirits of the juſt made perfect; but one moment alſo muſt put others out of their ſenſual pleaſurs and delights, the Prince off his throne, and theſe who have been wallowing in the world down to theſe dark and horrid priſons, where with the ceaſing of this worlds melody, they are forthwith met with that horrid noiſe and howling of the Devils and of all the company of the damned. 4. Oh! if men would conſider, what thoughts they ſhall then have in another world of that other world, and what other thoughts of their former ſtate and condition; how far they will finde this beyond all they ever thought or conceived at a diſtance. 5. Should it not cauſe aſtonishment to think ſeriouſly on this great change, which admits no after change, but that there long eternity is the true

measure of the souls duration after death; O what a long breathing word to be ever ever blessed or miserable, where the one hath no fear and can goe no more out, & the other no hope, or possibility thereof; the hope of the hireling is not there, that he may change his master at the nixt terme, for these gates are everlastingly shut, by the decree of him who alters not.

Now to shut up this argument, I shall offer one instance more, wherein the world may see the truth of the Scripture; and therewith of a divine providence convincingly demonstrat, if prejudice did not draw a vail and obstruct so excellent a discovery, it is this, *That the way of God is perfect.* Psal. 18. v. 30. *and that his works are perfect and his wayes judgment,* Deut. 32. v. 4. yea, *that he do's all things well.* Mark. 7. v. 37. which testimony then the multitude was forced to bear to this great truth, and O how great a truth is it! which can be said neither of Angels nor men, but to him hath a peculiar respect, even to him alone, in whose way there is nothing crooked, no mistake no inequality, nothing too much, or superfluous, nothing out of due time that is either too soon, or too late, nothing incongruous, nothing misplaced, yea, in all he do's nothing which is not best done, which any could rectify or make better, but in every piece of his worke leaves matter of wonder behind, and thus declares himself to be God; I know this is a truth the World cannot well bear, but pretends a visible contradiction from the great disorder that things here seem to be in, for men will oppose to this, what a miscarrying there is of instruments, what a strange emergency there is of most grievous and cross accidents, the most promising means frequently blasted, yea how good and evil

is

is ſo ſtrangely interweaved; and is not the preſent day oft undoing the work and labour of the former; yet whatever the World can ſay to darken this great truth, *That the way of the Lord is abſolutely perfect*, it muſt ſhine; yea, it do's not want clearneſs when by a thick interpoſition betwixt us and the ſame, there may be need of clearing it, the ſun ceaſes not to ſhine when the clouds obſtruct its brightnes as to us, O that theſe who will debate ſo great a truth, would but come neer, and by a ſerious perpending, conſider the work of the Lord, then ſhould they ſee ſo much in the dayly tract and adminiſtration of providence, yea, even in moſt ordinary paſſages thereof, that might areaſt their ſpirit with aſtonishment, the diſcovery whereof they ſhun by keeping a diſtance with it.

I ſhall touch a little this demonſtration, how this piece of divine truth is verified and write out in the event, to the obſervation of the World, that they who cannot ſpiritually diſcern the ſame, yet have ſo much witneſſed to dazle their eyes, and force this acknowledgement, that the way of the Lord is perfect, and he hath done all things well; and for clearing, I would offer ſome particulars, though few, yet ſo very comprehenſive that in a large meaſure they reach not only theſe great works of God, wherein he moſt eminently declares himſelf about the Church, but takes in alſo the moſt ordinary things of providence, here under the ſun, and therein demonſtrats the certainty of this truth.

Firſt you may ſee this clearly verified, that *the way of the Lord is perfect, in the whole frame, and ſtructure of the Church of Chriſt here*, which is made a great wonder, and an aſtonishing piece of the work of God, beyond the moſt exquiſite humane contrivance, that

that ever was; it is true her glory, that do's moſt affect the eye, & ravish the heart, it is within, and lyes not in the common road of mens obſervation, yea, ſome parts of this excellent body oftimes are in ſuch a diſorder, as darkens the beauty of the whole, there is ſuch an intermixture of the hay and ſtubble of humane inventions, with this choiſe building, that helps to mar its order and beauty, the carved work allo may be ſpoil'd and broken down, as with axes and hammers; yet with all theſe diſadvantages, there is a glory on the Church of Chriſt, an awful Majeſty, ſuch convincing marks of its grandour, even under its ruins, as have forc't the World, and the great men thereof, to conſider that ſight with wonder, and amazment, which yow ſee *Pſal.* 48. they ſaw, they marvelled, and haſted away, and the preceeding words gives clear reaſon; for God was known in her palaces for a refuge, they ſaw ſomething both in the grandour and frame of the Church, and in her preſervation, that forc't them to ſee that it was ſomething, more than humane. Now to clear this a little, do but conſider theſe few inſtances, wherein you may ſee the great and ſtupendious fabrick of the Church, and how all things are there well ordered by him who hath framed it. 1. You may ſee on what a ſure foundation it is built, even that of the Prophets, and Apoſtles, which is the Scripture of God, whereon as it is manifeſtly founded, it is no leſs marvellouſly united and joyned together in Jeſus Chriſt, who is the chief corner ſtone; will you ſeriouſly conſider the forme of the houſe, and the fashions thereof, its goings out and comings in, with all its ordinances, and there you may ſee how marvellouſly exact and uniforme this building is. 2. Is it not likewiſe obvious that the Church thus fitly

fitly joined together and knit by all that the joynts do ſupply in its whole complex frame groweth up as a building to the Lord? Yea is there not a very ſtrait union and correſpondence betwixt all the parts thereof in the ſame faith and worship, that though divided in ſo many parcels through the World, yet is ſtill one intire body, the union whereof the variety of members and theſe of ſuch various ſyzes, that great inequality amongſt them in their growth the remotnes of place, different languages, exil, or change of countreys, yet cannot break off that neer ty, that joins the Church of Chriſt together. 3. What a wonderful contrivance is it which is in the World, yet not of it, that ſpreads it ſelf among the Nations, yet loſeth not its own diſtinct being, is mixed with humane ſocieties, yet an incloſure and incorporation by her ſelf; a fountain of ſweet waters ſealed, though ſurrounded with this great ſalt Ocean of the world, is made up of many particular Churches yet every part homogeneous and of the ſame nature with the whole, and though it ſeems to be open to ſore aſſaults, yet is a defenced city, which is impaled, hath both her walls and watchmen, her bulwarks and ſtrong towers. 4. This is of ſuch a frame, that is both viſible and inviſible, yet not two diſtinct Churches, though under diverſe conſiderations it comprehends both without any jar, and hath communion with Jeſus Chriſt as her head, for life ſtanding related to him as his myſtical body, and yet as a viſible politick body, is related alſo to him, as its ſupreme head, by a political government and guidance, and hath an expreſſe charter granted for its extents and rights. 5. This muſt be ſaid of it, though black, yet comely; though it do's not want ſome ſpots they do not ſo far mar her beauty, but that in all its ſeveral adminiſtrations there

there appears a ſingular grace; it hath indeed its blemiſhes and failings, yet every meaſure and degree thereof do's not forefault her relation rights and priledges. 6. Is it not a marvellous frame, which do's not want a corrupt mixture, yet in its rule and conſtitution do's allow no corruption; and though many are found groſs within, yet do's it difference betwixt the precious and the vile, yea ſhuts its gates aswell as it opens, and is no more tender & eaſy in her admiſſion, then awful and authoritative in her rejection. 7. Is ſo well conſtitute, that all her officers hath their appointment, and each their work and charge deſigned, yet no greater variety of ſervice and imployments then there is of gifts, which from her head are diſpenſed and ſuted to the ſame. 8. She is of ſuch a mould and frame that though she can boaſt of an intrinſick power, within her ſelf, yet muſt derive it from another fountaine, yea, muſt have a directory and rule from her ſupreme head and lawgiver for exercing the acts of that power, which alſo hath its proper object even the inward man, and its peculiar end, the edification of the body, to which this power and the exerciſe thereof is directed. 9. This is ſuch a body, the members whereof are indeed ſubject to the magiſtrat, and denyes no due obedience to that power, yet without any ſubordination or ſubjecting of the Church as ſuch to an humane power, and though it hath not its authority or juriſdiction from men, it denies no juſt reſpect to theſe; it do's binde and looſe upon the earth which no humane power can make void; and though caſt in among the nations, yet by peculiar bounds is kept from all other ſocieties diſtinct; she hat her judicatories, and there, a ſubordination of the leſſer to the greater, yet no allowed preeminence and inequality amongſt her officers

officers; yea, though her government is truly monarchick with respect to her head, for there is but one supreme Lord, yet with respect to the servants and officers it is a most excellent well tempered aristocracy, which holds off these gradual differences of power and greatnes amongst them, which is so much in use amongst the nations; In a word, O will you consider this choise & exquisite frame, and you will see how both tendernes and severity doth here concurre, what a healing there is here in her sharpest rebukes and censures; whilst a privat essay, for gaining, is to go before a publick and judicial procedure, yea her authoritative determinations without prejudice to the judgment of Christian prudence and discretion, which belongs to every one of her members: Consider also how she wears not out, but hath still a spring after the winter, hath both her signes and her seasons, and whilst see is losing, and in a decay as to particular members, she is still travelling in birth for a new offspring and successi-on: O that they who stand a far would but come neer and seriously look on this rare piece of work, *Go about Zion, consider well her towers and bulwarks*, &c. that you may see this is a fabrick the Lord hath founded, & raised up & that surely this piece of the word is there, in fulfilled, *His way is perfect, & he do's all things well.*

Second. Is not this great truth clearly demonstrat, not only in the frame, but in the whole conduct, and *administration of providence, about the Church*, which is indeed one of the most marvellous discoveries, we have of God here; yea even to the world, is oft convincingly obvious, through what a varietie of dispensations, he useth to bring forth his work, and makes his way oft break out of the bosome of a dark cloud; yea, so unexpectedly can make these per-

perplexed changes, with which the Church militant is tossed resolve in such a satisfying close, that it may be seen they were all directed for her interest and advantage: I know this is a great deep, and we cannot have such a discoverie of the providence of God about the Church, nor reach the meaning of things in their first mould, as in their after-tendencie, and product, O that marvelous sight which shall once be when that great work of providence, that now is put over in the hand of the Mediator, hath its perfect close, and the whole frame and contexture set up together as one entire piece to look upon, that is now by several pieces, and through a various succession of ages carried on: yet we must say, the Lord herein comes so neer, even in the darkest times, and makes the glorie of this truth in such a measure shine forth, that may convincingly witness to any ordinarie observers the way of the Lord is *perfect* in all that he do's; I shall here offer some few things that in everie time are obvious to these who take pleasure in such a discoverie, and desire not to keep at a distance therewith. 1. Must it not be said of his way, that he do's nothing in vain, but makes all things congruous to his end, even things that amongst themselves do's most cross one another, do's he not carrie on his designe by the miscarying of instruments, and bring forth his greatest works by mid'ses most small and contemptible? I know the world would object, they can see no such thing, and indeed providence cannot be understood, or the meaning thereof by one look: but I must ask, do you discerne the motion of the hand upon the clock, even whilst it is certainly going forward; yet when it come's to the houre and strikes you will see it was then moving: It is sure there are such periods, that providence hath, where its meaning

meaning do's not clearly break up, until then that it comes to the ſtriking of the houre, if we may ſo ſay; and then the moſt ſtupide are forc't to obſerve what once ſeem'd moſt improbable, in the way of the Lord. 2. Is it not alſo obvious how the Lord doth enſnare men in the work of their own hand? and turns their wrath unto his praiſe, how he takes the wiſe and outwits them by their counſels, makes events fall out contraire to the ſecond cauſes, fruſtrats the moſt promiſing means, and by things unknown and unthought upon, do's oft bring forth the deliverance of the Church; yea how out of ſhame and reproach he do's even bring about his glorie; ſure theſe are not ſo far in the dark that in any age the world can altogether pretend ignorance thereof, and is not his way perfect, of which ſuch things can be ſaid? 3. Have we not this diſcovery how the Chuch is oft fed by the rod, yea, under that appears with ſuch advantage, that it may be ſaid her meat hath been brought forth out of the eater, how uſually is her mercy and enlargment prepared for her, by the ſharpeſt down caſting, is humbled in order to an upraiſing and deliverance, yea oft is one ſtep of the way of the Lord made clear to her by another; O is not here ſo excellent & marvellous a method, that all the wit and invention of the world cannot follow.

4. His way is indeed perfect, and by an infinite wiſdome managed, which do's at once, and by the very ſame providence reach ſo many ſeveral deſignes, yea bring forth ſuch various and contraire effects, that no humane reaſon could ever judge the reſult and concluſion by the premiſſes, how ſeverity, and mercy ſhould be at once brought forth, a more full ſtroke on the adverſary, by their further raiſing, yea by a long forbearance of that ſtroke; how he

should also make use of the same mean both for humbling and proving, and to do his people good in the latter end: O how perfect must his way be, where all the steps thereof, & after product would seem repugnant yet no real jar; for the Church sinking yet do's not perish, in a flame, yet not consumed, but is thereby kept alive, brought under the yoke of the oppressour to make her grow and flourish, is wounded and smiten for her further healing, and a witness of his tenderness to her thereby; hath a greater weight and burden put on, to give her thus ease and enlargment, yea, is chastned and tristed with suffering to prevent suffering, that she may rest in the day of trouble; sure these are a part of the wayes of God, and may be visibly demonstrat in the conduct of his providence about the Church even to the conviction of the world; but oh! it is hard to see where men will shut their eyes. 5. Is it not obvious, what strange things do sometime fall in betwixt the beginning and close of some special piece of providence about the Church, that do pass humane reach to give a present reason for the same; yet in all these may there not be discerned a remarkable dependence and connection of things, how in such a variety of cross events, and in a long continued tract of providence, every thing fals in aright, in its own place, yea every step, every circumstance so proportioned by a marvelous disposal, and conduct thereof, to sute an other, for making the whole complex providence beautiful, that on a serious review the world must confess, this is a concatenation so strange, that must be his work & his alone, who sees things from the beginning to the end. 6. How perfect is his way who can hasten, and dispatch his work by delayes, and when he seems to take a long circuit in bringing about

about his deſigne, yet loſes no time, but in ſuch a viſible going back, do's moſt effectually move forward, yea, is it not ſeen how he makes things fall in, that are very unexpected, croſs, and remote (that would never have entered in our thoughts) to anſwer his bleſſed end? and even diſpoſe that, which above all might ſeem moſt directly deſtructive to the Church, to be of all other things moſt effectual, and ſubſervient to her advance, brings her more quickly foreward to the harborough, by a ſtorme then a calme, O have we not ſuch great things to obſerve in the way of the Lord, that may ſhew it is indeed perfect. 7. It is alſo very clear though not on the firſt view, yet in the cloſe and iſſue, what a certaine ſteady motion providence hath and keeps on its courſe, whilſt the World is reeling to and fro, how the Churches mercy hath by greateſt diſappointments been more fully anſwered, then in the moſt probable way, yea when her outgate ſeem'd furtheſt off, and had been much followed with many a weary look from ſome other airth, with what a ſtrange ſurpriſal, do's providence oft break up at her hand, as it were from under the ground with an unexpected mercy. 8. You may ſee his way is perfect who puts a peculiar beauty upon every occurrent of providence, and brings it forth in the very fit opportune time, that it could not fall out more ſeaſonably and with more advantage to the Church; is there not a ſeen cauſe for her ſharp trials and the neceſſity thereof no leſs diſcernable, then there is of the winter, for the profite and advantage of the earth; and is it not alſo manifeſt her reviving came never too late, but in the very fitteſt time; I know the World may object, they can ſee this in the revolutions of the year, but not in any ſuch

changes of the Church, yet I am ſure this is manifeſt that the Church of Chriſt hath her ſad and more comforting times here, with as diſcernable a ſucceſſion of the one to the other as there is of the Summer to the Winter, yea that under theſe viciſſitudes of her condition she is ſtill ſeen to look forth with a peculiar advantage; I shall adde; what a marvellous compoſition and temperament of contraries is diſcernable in this excellent frame of providence; there is nothing here incongruous, nothing here too ſmall which doth not fall under its reach, and nothing ſo great that can overreach it, here is no jar or diſagreeing with the diligent uſe of means, yet do's this riſe ſo far above the ſame, that no humane care can bend it to their will, nor is there any running croſſe to ſuch a current: here is indeed an unſearchable deep! Yet ſo much is there broken up, and made clear that may convincingly witneſs and verifie this truth, even to ordinary obſervers, the way of the Lord is perfect, & what we now cannot attain in its diſcovery we should learn to admire and ſolidly believe a more clear manifeſtation thereof.

3. I shall yet further purſue this demonſtration with reſpect to *that great and marvellous work of God in in the redemption of the Church*; a contrivance we may ſay more wonderfull then this whole ſtructure of the univerſe of the heavens and earth, which are ſo exquiſitly fram'd: For here the thing it ſelf is not more aſtonishing, then the way and conduct of infinite wiſdome is, in the whole frame, and all the ſteps thereof; O this great thing, that mens diſtance therewith do's only keep them from being dazled, where their ignorance is the great let why they do not more wonder at it; this is indeed far above nature, that without a divine illumination, it cannot be known, or under-

understood, yet we must say, so much is brought forth and discovered, that these who have only report, and thence give some ordinary assent thereto, cannot have their reason and judgment in exercise without some such conviction upon their souls, that surely this is a contrivance above humane reach, and worthy of the great God; yea that herein his way is most absolutly perfect; and no sight can be like this, where we may see so excellent a correspondence between the foundation and superstructure, that the whole tract of the Gospel is but one intire and compleat mean for glorifying God, and do's in this as the ultimat end resolve: Here men may see the greatnes of his power, that unexpressible freedome of his grace, the holy severity of justice, all meet and joyne together in a sweet agreement; where both justice is salved, and fully answered, and yet sinners saved, where mercy do's rejoice over condemnation, vengeance is taken on our inventions, and the inventers escape: O strange! a redemption without price and absolutly free, as to sinners; yet all that a just God could exact fully satisfied and told downe; it is here we may rise and pursue this great thing up to the fountain head, which is the soveraigne pleasure of God, and is the internal impulsive cause, and thence follow it downe to that infinite satisfaction of the Mediator, which is the great meritorious cause, and here we may see, how marvellously well ordered all the steps of this way are; all the parts of this contrivance; how the elect are made meet for the inheritance through sanctification of the Spirit, how faith hath its special concurrence and instrumentality, without prejudice to the absolute freedome of grace, since it is freely given to believe; how these excellent midses are by a most strait connec-

tion linked with the eternal counsel of God, and in a most beautiful order joined one with another. Here do's sanctification flow from an eternal decree, and like an excellent stream doth run down through time, until it lose it selfe, to say so, in that great deep of everlasting blessednes, yea thus the purpose of the Lord runs under the ground, concerning his people, until it break up at last in their heart, by their answering the call of the Gospel; O how stately a piece of work this is, and is not his way perfect therein, where you may see that grand plot of the Devil to undoe man, break upon himselt, and by the seed of the woman his head crushed; where so glorious a fabrick is raised out of so great a ruine, and poor man established by his fall, where the glory of the soveraigne God, the freedome of grace, and mans blessednes do's at once meet together, where the cure is as broad and large as the wound, and the restauration made to answer to every piece of that ruine, I mean not only in mans being ransomed from eternal wrath, but that the enmity should be killed and taken away, and such a marvellous change of his nature by the renewing of the Spirit, which even here restores him in part to that he lost; It is on this blessed contrivance we may see men brought under a constraint, by irresistible grace, yet without violence, their reason further raised and refined, yet not broken, and its true liberty not taken away, but restored; yea a notable consistency betwixt moral perswasive arguments and the efficacious power of grace, betwixt mens planting and watering in the use of means, and the alone encrease thereof from the Lord, betwixt a physical and moral concurrence in producing one and the same effect, betwixt those two desires in prayer, *Da Domine, quod jubes,*

&

& jube quod vis; Is there not likewise here a most excellent sutableness and congruity, betwixt repentance and remission of sins, without prejudice to the freedome of grace, since he gives repentance as well as requires it, and makes his people what he would have them to be; O how marvellous a contrivance is this where the blessed Majesty of God finds an argument in himself when man had none where with to plead, was found in the forme of a servant, and became our neerest Kinsman, to redeem the inheritance; where his peoples standing is ensured by another surety and strength, then their own, not on their apprehending, but their being apprehended; where the Lord do's oblige himselfe by bond to make that good, which is only of grace, and is most freely given; where he both fram's the desire within the soul, and satisfies it; I shall only adde, it is here the redeem'd have nothing in themselves to boast, & the reprobat none but themselvs to challenge, for on whomsoever that door is shut, they have therein actively concurred, to draw a bar for shutting themselves out.

4. I shall offer one instance more wherein this great truth may be demonstrat to the world that the way of the Lord is perfect, that his works are done in judgment, yea do's all things well, with respect to that, *marvelous order of nature and disposal of the works of God under the sun*, how unexpressibly well all are fitted for some use, and directed to their proper end: this is indeed a truth, wherein the greatest Atheists may see this piece of the Scripture convincingly verified, wherein God comes so neer that men may feel after him Acts. 17. Ver. 27. that it may be said, there is no way to shift this discoverie, but to stop their eares, and shut their eyes: O what a wonderful disposal may be seen, even in the commonest things,

with a mutual subserviency to each other; and in this great variety and throng of the creatures, is it not obvious how each hath its voice and speech, to give us something of instruction, and everie thing hath some matter of wonder in it, that we may say, it is hard to be an Atheist, there must be a strange violenting of their light, where the invisible God com's so neer, to make himself known by things visible, and by so marvellous a conduct and ordering thereof, shew's unto the sons of men he do's all things well: Oh, may it not be said, we cease to wonder, because every day we live and converse amongst wonders: now it is here the world hath a demonstration of the Scripture, that they dare not debate, lest they should deny sense aswel as reason, & if any will question, the glorious former of all things why things are thus ordered & disposed, let him but retire within himself and he'll finde the want & defect is truly within, which he would chalenge in the way of the Lord; may we not see with astonishment, this frame and composure of the universe, how each thing doth answer its part, and to the conservation of the whole, how amidst a great contrariety an excellent concord is manifest, in all its different parts, natures and dispositions: I must truly say not only dutie but delight and pleasure may call men to this study; yea, even to lose themselves, as it were, in so sweet a labyrinth, where it is more easie to enter than to finde an outgate, and all things do witness even to mens senses the truth of the Scripture; it is sad we have so choise and true a historie everie day to read on of the works of God which are not in themselves greater then that wisdome is by which they are ordered, & it should be for the most part as a sealed book: but it is not here in a general this truth can be reached, O will you

you come and see, consider the work of the Lord and you must also see it is perfect and his wayes are judgment, yea, that he hath done all things well, do but consider this stupendious frame of the universe, a fabrick that in all its parts is most exactly joyned, and nothing in it defective or out of order; here you may see that great Minister of nature the sun, with what advantage it is placed and fitted to dispense its light and refreshing influences to the earth, is it not with such wisdome that to move in a higher or lower orb would not thus answer the advantage of things below, with what a constant motion do's it travel betwixt the tropicks to fulfil its annual course, and in diverse parts do's successivly arise, that by turns it may give the several parts of the earth a visite; should we cease to wonder at the rising and setting thereof, because it is so frequently seen; O may not this arreast our thoughts with astonishment with what wisdome it is made subservient all alongst its course to cause Summer and Winter, Spring and Harvest; yea how its approaches and withdrawings are gradual, that by its ascent in the spring it may dispose our bodies for the summer, and by its descent in such a degree in the harvest may prepare and fit us for the Winter, that there should not be an immediat bordering betwixt these extremes; is not its correspondence also manifest, that it hath with things here below, which do's not only reach the surface of the earth, but the most inward bowels & secret caverns thereof, for its power is known on minerals aswel as plants: Is it not also evident that this glorious body of the moon though of a lesser glory then the other is for an other use then for men to gaze thereon, how it keeps them from groaping in utter darkness through the night, and lights a candle to the world when the sun

is gone downe, which by its withdrawing do's so far discover the glory of the moon and stars, that its brightnes did vail and darken; its influence is known also upon the sea, upon seeds and plants, yea upon the humours and complexion of mens bodies; O what innumerable employments are these by which it is made continually subservient to the world! And do you not see, how the night hath its special use and is well ordered aswel as the day, yea that it hath its peculiar beautie, & by its darknes doth commend the light and makes its approach more sweet and desirable; this gives the labouring world some time for repose, and most observably answers mans weariness and necessity of such a rest with so fit a season, that we may say it but draws a curtain about us for that end, and do thus retire the earth, and puts it in a sweet and silent composure from the noyse and hurryings of the day; yea do's not every evening solemnly warne men of their approaching death, and the swift passing away of time, that they may have no excuse of being surprised in this great change, who have so grave so frequent a monitor, to speak it to them; but let us a little futher follow this choyse enquiry and search of nature which is so clear a witness to the Scripture, and you may see how marvellous these various motions of the heavens are, the position of the stars and constellations, where each hath its own proper course, yet all carried about to one general and common end, to shew there must be a first mover who is not subject to motion or change, buth do's manifestly determine al these: O strange! How do's this great body of the earth hing upon nothing, that a thing so vast & ponderous should lean upon the air as on a foundation, must there not be here a piece of art above humane reach, how

thus

thus it do's keep its center, & rests thereupon & is it not clear how steady the axis of the earth is, & perpetually parallel with it self, that it cannot tumble this or that way: What a marvellous order is also seen in these higher motions of the celestial bodies, of which some are slow, others more rapide, some tend to the east, others towards the west, & yet from these though thus cross to other, there results a singular harmony, in which the conservation of the World & production of things here below are concern'd, which could not so well have answered this, without such a variety in their courses; It is true the Lord might have made every day a years length, & caus'd the sun keep its course, from east to west so long, but O how well are all these things ordered, & that thus he doth divide our life in such short stages, to make us more frequently minde our change, wee see likewise how marvellously the earth is framed in its various parts and proportions, and the singular advantage it hath both in its posture, and figure; the mountains and high places do not mar its beauty, nor want their use, where the beasts have a shelter provided; and is not nature likewise more displayed and laid open to men by the plains, and valeys, which are to the earth a special ornament? How manifold is the use of the air which fils up that vast space betwixt the heavens and earth, and is so fit a medium for correspondence betwixt the higher and lower world; it is here the birds finde use for their wings, thorough this the rains finde an easy passage, this do's interveen betwixt the sun, and the earth, yet is no let to the communication, either of light or heat, but its scorching is thus qualified, by that sweet coole breathing of the air; is not the singular use and advantage of the winds also known? And how these are both directed and bounded, so that

that men can neither cauſe a ſtorme nor a calme, at their pleaſure; and O can you look on the ſea, and not wonder, what marvellous things are there, how it is ſhut up whith gates and barres, and hath its appointed bounds, whithout which there could be no reaſon, how a bank of ſand ſhould reſtrain the great Ocean from breaking forth; its manifold uſe and advantage is alſo known; would any wish that the vvhole earth vvere dry land? and O ſtrange that this not only is made paſſable, but by that art of navigation becomes a more eaſy vvay for tranſport and commerce, by vvhich cities and countreys are made to flourish, do you not ſee that regular courſe it keeps in its ebbings and flovvings, the ſingular uſe and ſubſervience of the tides, ſo that vvhen men are difficulted in an inquiry about the natural cauſe of theſe, they cannot but obſerve the ſpecial end, and advantage thereof, may vve not vvith vvonder alſo ſee, how theſe parts of the world, vvhich have the moſt ſcorching day, and greateſt heat, have uſually the longeſt night to qualify it vvith ſuch a cooling moiſture. How theſe countreys which have no rain as Egypt have ſome ſupply thereof by an overflowing of the rivers, do you ſee any members either of men, or beaſts ſuperfluous, and want an uſe, or is there any poiſone but hath ſome peculiar antidote provided, yea the moſt hurtful creatures as Serpents and Vipers are found of ſingular uſe in medicine againſt their own hurt, as the oyle of Scorpions is againſt the ſting thereof; you ſee the poor people have medicinal waters provided without mony, & it is a notable remark which is certainly known of one who incloſed ſome ſuch well in his ground that he might put an impoſt thereon had it taken away and run dry on his hand;

what

what a marvellous uſe is there of natural antipathies and ſympathies whereon the operation of medicine, the ſpecial improvement of navigation, by making uſe of the load-ſtone doth ſo much depend, you ſee how the harveſt gives a large compenſation for the toile of the ſpring, and do not the poore mans labours through the day make his bed ſoft in the evening, and his reſt ſweet unto him? You ſee that correſpondence the heavens keep with the earth in theſe ſweet refreshing showers, by which its ſeminal vertue is drawn forth, and thus the rain doth moiſten what the heat would ſcorch, you may ſee how it is diſtill'd and drop't down, not in violent ſpaites, but as it were through a ſmall ſieve, or otherwiſe it would hurt more then help; you would not deſire to want rain, nor yet to have it perpetual, and thus it is ordered; are not the vapours exhaled from the earth, that by refreshing showrs they may return thither again? O how manifold are the works of the Lord! And in what wiſdome hath he done them all; Is not the pain & travel of the beaſts in bringing forth their young, proportioned to their condition, and to that lodging they have, *Iob* 39: 3. *They bow themſelves, and bring forth their young, and caſt forth their ſorrows*, and as their time and duration is for moſt part shorther than mans, is not their growth alſo ſuited thereto; you ſee men have their lodging furniſht ere they come in the World, the breaſts are provided, and by a wonderful inſtinct, they are taught to ſeek after the ſame; it is known how the want of hearing or ſight uſeth ſome other way to be recompenſed, with ſome ſpecial natural ſagacity; Yea, a want and defect in ſome parts of the body is oft ſupplied with a greater agility in ſome other members thereof, which is known in many remarkable inſtances, ſuch as that woman

woman in this countrey, not long since who had no armes from her birth, but could with no leſs dexterity make uſe of her right foot for all the uſes of her hand; You ſee how the beaſts have ſome natural defence and are taught ſelf preſervation, and what the hare and hinde wants of the lions paw and ſtrength is made up oft by a more ſwift foot; what an advantagious antipathy there is amongſt the beaſts, leſt the earth ſhould be overrun with theſe which are hurtful; the dog fitted by a ſtrange tendency of its kinde, to purſue the wolf and the fox, and the cat for deſtroying of rats; You ſee how the oxen are tamed to endure the yoke, and brought under diſcipline, whoſe ſtrength is above many of the wilde beaſts; are not theſe things that are moſt abſolutly neceſſary moſt eaſie likewiſe to be had and whilſt there is ſuch a varietie of labour and toile do's attend the lot of man here, doth not the earth alſo afford a varietie of delights? you ſee the bird needs no inſtructer to build their neſts, and choiſe a fit place, nor do they miſtake their ſeaſons, yea do not theſe ſweet Muſicians by their natural melodie call men to praiſe, whoſe debt is much above theirs? Is there not a marvellous coalition betwixt the graft and the tree, which exceeds humane art if nature did not ſo wonderfully cooperat therein, and in the inoculating a ſmall bud into a ſtock; and O that wonderful encreaſe that follows the ſeed thrown into the ground how it dies and rots there that it may riſe with the greater luſter and advantage, and by ſuch a ſignificant embleme teach men the certainty of the raiſing of their bodies, for its ſure the ordinarie things of nature are great and convincing Hieroglyphicks to hold forth more divine things if we could but read them: do you not ſee what veins of coals and other minerals

go through the earth? whence it is furnisht and hath it materials for dayly use, and for an improvment of mens faculties: is not the earth watered by an intercourse which springs and rivers hath with the sea? and what some parts of the world want, is it not in other things supplied; that everie countrey hath almost some peculiar advantages; it is known how the coldest places of the earth, do most abound with the warmest furres; you see the beasts want not their table; & is not the lillie well clothed? Doth the grass of the ground want its use? Yea is not the very cullour thereof notably suted for mens eyes? What cause of wonder is there of the different forms, the vertues and varietie of plants? You see the little ants have their magazine and storehouse, the bees want not some order and government; yea no humane skill can frame such work as theirs is: But *O Man* what a curious and exquisite fabrick is that which did come in amongst the last of the creation? but as the greatest wonder thereof, a most rare piece of work of a strange various & subtile composition, in which there is so notable an harmonie made up of many contraries; I think these who would learne Atheisme are not only concernd to stiffle their reason but to shut their eyes from looking on themselves and the frame of their bodies, which is so curiously wrought with nerves sinews and veins, with such a varietie of parts, and yet not one bone or Muscle superfluous. (¶)

THE FOURTH ARGUMENT

I Shall here offer to prove the Scriptures accomplishment is this, *That whereof the most part, as to these special predictions, and promises that concern the Church*

Church, is fulfilled, and hath now taken place in their appointed times, which we may at this day clearly read in the event, and but a little part thereof now remaineth to be made out, must be a sure truth. But the Scripture is thus fulfilled, and the prophecies thereof now made legible in the history of providence, and in the works of God about his Church. Therefore, &c.

I would premit here some few things ere I speak particularly to this argument.

1. Though the Scripture is thus wonderfully suited by the Lord, and taketh place in every generation as if it were alone directed to that time, yet, it is also clear that a special part thereof hath its proper accomplishment in these ages, and periods of time, to which it doth in a peculiar way relate, some part of it, which did concern the times of the Old Testament, some that doth also answer to the times of the Gospel, and a part of it which hath a peculiar respect to these latter dayes, which the Lord is now bringing forth, and we wait for a more full accomplishment, that it is on a near approach.

2. It is also sure that the whole work of God, and his providence about his Church here in the World which was perfect from the beginning, and before him from eternity, is comprehended under the written word, where the Lord hath fully revealed his minde, and counsel anent every event, and concernment of the Church; though we oft be in the dark in finding out the same, but the event will in due time speak for it self, which should cause us until then, with much sobriety passe our judgement on some of these truths that are not yet fulfilled.

3. It is clear that the Prophets of old did not onely foretel such great changes, and revolutions, as were to go over the Churches head, and declare the certainty

tainty thereof, but we find these propheeies oft point at the times, and periods of time, whereto they did relate, and though sometimes in dark tearmes, yet did clearly shew that there was a certain prefixed time, and not at every time they could have their performance.

4. We would consider how the full accomplishing of the Scripture, and the perfecting the Lords work about his Church will be at once, and doth keep foot together, and then shall a full, and satisfying discovery of Gods way, and providence, and all that he hath been doing in the World clearly break up, when the great mystery of God in his written word is finished, and the Church so near to land.

That I way speak a little to so grave a subject: I would lay down these two things to be considered. 1. How much of the Scripture, and predictions thereof may be now seen clearly verifyed in the event. 2. What doth yet remain to have an accomplishment in these last times, by which we may certainly judge how near the Lords work about his Church is to a close; anent the first I shall point at some of these most concerning events, and changes which the Church hath met with, wherein we may see what of the Scripture may at this day be read in the history of providence, and is certainly fulfilled.

I. What is already accomplished.

1. Let us go back to these first times after the fall, and see *that dreadful stroke which came upon the old World by the flood after an universal defection from God*, & we shall there find the fulfilling of that which Noah that great Preacher of righteousness had oft fore-

told, and of these threatnings which by Moses were there recorded, wherein it may be very manifest. 1. That this truth besides Divine authority, no records of auncient times no antiquity could ever contradict, yea, some of the eldest writers doe clearly witnes something of an universal deluge over the earth with the strange preservation of some from it, however they were in the dark as to many circumstances thereanent. Josephus doth cite Berosus the Caldean about this, who without doubt had then some of these oldest records true, and uncorrupt. Eusebius also doth mention some fragments of Abidenus, and Appolidorus, which in his time were extant, clearly pointing at the flood, and at Noah under the name of Zisuthrus with his sending out of brids to see if the waters were asswaged. 2. There is nothing here doth contradict reason, how this might be brought about, even in the way of ordinary natural causes, which the Lord did make use of for that end; for we find the windowes of Heaven were opened the air being condensed into clouds, and their retentive power looosed, these great floodgates were thus set loose; which falling not in drops, but all in a full body like the spouts and cataracts of the West-Indies might soon overwhelm the earth with aboundance of water, while these fountaines also of the great deep beneath were broken up, which was not only the Ocean let forth to go over its banks, bnt an universal vent to all the veines of the earth, and that great mass of waters which is in the bowels thereof, which from beneath meeting these that were from above, may give men a clear, and rational account how such a thing might be. 3. This piece of the Scripture is most congruous, and aggreable to the whole, & the great scope and drift of the same, for it points out

an

an universal defection, and an universal stroke meeting together, it leads us forward to Christ, of whom the ark was an excellent shadow, and of that salvation which in and by him the Church hath from eternal wrath, and is a very manifest pledge, and sign of that last destruction of the World, which though not in that manner, yet, shall once surely be, and find men in such a condition, as this flood found them into in the dayes of Noah.

(¶) II. What we find expressly threatned by the Lord, *Gen.* 11. v. 7 as a stroke and judgment upon men for their ambition and pride, *The confounding of their languages*, is it not also most clearly verified and write forth to the view of the world in the event? that whilst men cannot deny or debate a thing which is so conspicuous and undeniable, they must also see a fulfilling of the Scripture, and that there was a divine hand in this strange stroke which may be a convincing refutation of Atheisme, if such do not willingly shut their eyes at these clear evidences.

1. That it is sure, there is such a confusion and variety of languages in the earth at this day, whence it is divided, one part thereof so much rent from another, commerce and correspondence thus made difficult, and a bar drawn betwixt nations, by a different speech, and do not the most ancient records of the world witnes the same to have been in former ages. 2. It is also sure that no tradition or humane history, but the Scripture only gives us an account of this strange thing; how it should be, or whence its true rise is; yea these who have write most of other things, yet can give no reason why they write in one language more then in another, but that it is proper to their countrey where they had their e-

ducation, but how the race of men who have such a community in other things should be thus divided is indeed a mystery which divine truth can only unvail and shew its meaning. 3. It is sure there is no language by an other that is natural to men, but what *ex instituto* is acquired whether by long continued use as children doth their mother tongue, or by set rules, it is true Adam who was the first man had his by some extraordinary infusion, but it is found a pitiful fancy alleadged by some that young children who have never heard speech and have been thus keept at a distance would speak the first language of the world and consequently Hebrew, for the contraire of this is certainly proven. 4. Is not this confusion and diversity of languages which is in the world a most strange and marvellous thing, which in no ordinary way, yea without something of a miracle, could be brought about, and to no continuance of time, or invention of men can be attribute, if we consider these things. 1. It is clear that if man can be traced back to some original and beginning, there must then have been some one language, whilst the world was but in a family, so that if you will admit the truth of the creation, you may see it was not so at the beginning. 2. Is it not undenyable that men could not choyse so great a plague, and judgment on themselves if they had any use of reason, which would divide betwixt them, and the great part of mankinde, hinder trade and mutual interchange with other countreys, either in exporting, or importing most necessar commodities; that which also would obstruct humane knowledge, and the discovery of these excellent inventions, and experiments of other places, yea give man whose dayes are so few such a sore toyle and labour to acquire but a few

a few of these many different languages which are in the world. 3. Is it not also clear that this is above humane reach which men cannot judge, how in an ordinary way such different languages could have been found out and afterwards acquired by the body of nations, yea how there should be such an agreement in this amongst a vast multitude of different tempers and capacities, for it is obvious there should have then been an inventing of these first radical languages? I mean these that are not dependent upon, or interwoven one with another, but are wholly different as Greek, Latine, &c: and therewith such a vast Dictionary of words with their significancie and rules to conjoyne them in sentences, must have necessarly been framed, and abandoning also and turning off of some former language, so far as to the bringing of it in oblivion; yea should the universal consent and concurrence of the multitude in such places be required? I confess this were not so strange if such a difference betwixt languages were but in some peculiar mode or propriety of phrases, and alteration of words according to the various tempers and climats of the earth; but we may see what different languages there are wholy independent on other, not only in original words, but in the very whole frame and bulk, which can be no compound of other languages, as many of our modern tongues are, which do's truly state the case in such a manner, that the Scripture only can resolve how this should be, yea it is known besides many branches, commixtures & variations of languages which through continuance of time, through conquest and mingling of nations together are in the World, there is besides a vast number of these that may be on cleerest ground judged original and mother tongues, of which

(whatever leſſer variation there hath been by the adding of ſome new words, or the quiting of old; yet the whole bulk do's remain intire. 4. What a ſtrange and marvellous thing muſt this be, if we conſider that moſt of ancient maternal languages were previous to the uſe of letters, whence rules or a methode could be convoyed from one to another, if it had been only ſome humane invention; for we may know from ſureſt antiquity how long it was ere ſeveral nations reached a further way to communicat knowledge and repreſent their conceptions then by ſpeech and vocal tradition, or ſome ſignificant ſymboles or Hieroglyphicks which were then much in uſe to ſupply the want of letters, is it not known how little either by pen or printing hath been diſcovered to the World, but of ſuch late time, as is from cleareſt hiſtories written to us, thence we find very little of the Greek language upon record before Homers time; Now may not this clearly demonſtrat that in an ordinary way theſe languages could not then have been acquired, 5. It may be very convincing what the Scripture anent this holds forth that, by theſe different languages, nations and families were at firſt divided, *Geneſ.* 11. yea, that this was the firſt trial of bounding one of them from another, for which the World could never give another cauſe; thus did the Lord incloſe his Church in Iſrael, and by this diverſitie of languages did outlaw the reſt of the earth, for there, was that venerable firſt language of the Hebrew keept up, by which theſe ſacred oracles of the Old Teſtament were made knowne. I ſhall further adde, is not a divine hand eminently ſeen in this? that ſo great a bar, which for ſo long a time was betwixt the Church and the world, ſhould not only at laſt be taken off, but ſuch a curſe turn'd into

into a blessing, that the power of God and his verie immediat work in spreading the light amongst so many people of a strange language might now under the gospel be more conspicuous, that once such an interdiction had been served on the world thereby, to shut the nations out from the Church; for we may say there hath been as signal a miracle in the gift of tongues under the New Testament as there was formerly in the confusion thereof. (¶)

III. What we have expressly promised in the word of the *Churches delivery from Egypt*, and was foretold by Joseph at his death, that God should surely bring back his People out of that land, for which he left his bones to ly unburied as a pledge thereof, hath now many ages past been fulfilled. It is long since that remarkable day when God made a way for his People through the red sea, and his power known upon Pharaoh, and the Egyptians, since Moses with the Church did sing that triumphant song, *The horse, and his rider he hath cast in the sea*, wherein these things are most clear.

1. That this was a deed known, and publick in the time, which was not done in a corner, but in the view of the World, and before all the Children of Israel, and by them attested, and with greatest carefulnes transmitted to their children, and by these to the following generations, as a thing never to be forgotten.

2. Was testifyed by Moses so great a person, and eyewitnes thereof, one whom even the most auncient of heathen writers do mention with much respect, and in this did never challenge his testimony, though a matter of fact, and of that moment, which all the nations about could not but know, and both in the

preſent and after ages have the remembrance thereof keeped up; ſo that they might eaſily refute ſuch a thing if falſe, and we may judge the Egyptians, and many others, could want no goodwill to put diſgrace on a People they ſo much hated nor be ignorant of that which Moſes published in his own time, to whoſe works ſome of the auncienteſt heathen writers doe shew they have been no ſtrangers.

3. A truth which by Moſes was put in record, and delivered to the Jewes to be keept by them, and their children in all ſucceeding ages, a record which they did ſo narrowly look to, and had in that reverence, and eſteem, that all the ſyllabs, and letters thereof were by them numbred, leſt in the ſmalleſt point it ſhould be wronged, yea, vvere more careful to preſerve it then any nation can be of their moſt concerning rights, and charters.

4. A thing whereof the remembrance was yearly from that time celebrat by the Jewish Church, whence the inſtitution of the paſſover had its riſe, that deliverance being as a ſign, and ſacramental pledge of that great ſalvation by him who is our true paſſover.

IIII. What is held forth in the Scripture concerning *the more full grouth of the Iewiſh Church* that Iacob ſhould injoy a Scepter, which was foretold by dying Iacob, and promiſed once and again to Abraham by the Lord that his ſeed ſhould be as the ſand of the ſea, and enjoy Canaan for an inheritance, hath it not long ſince been fulfilled? Wherein theſe things are clear.

1. That for many ages Iſrael did enjoy that land in a moſt flowrishing condition which doth in part appear from theſe very ruines and deſolation, over which they

they have so long lamented, the glory of Ierusalem, and the Temple once so famous, which causeth such reverence amongst them to the very rubbish thereof at this day,

2. That they were once a people by themselves who were not mingled with the Nations, but kept at a distance by their Religion, and Lawes, from the rest of the World as a peculiar People to the Lord is a thing undenyable.

3. That whilest they enjoyed it there was a singular blessing of fruitfulnes thereon above other places, so as that small piece of ground was enough for an innumerable multitude of inhabitants, but is now at this day a barren sand, an extraordinary curse no lesse seen thereon then the blessing was in former times.

4. It is also evident that something in the way, and carriage of this people, even in their low wandering condition doth discover they have not forgot what once they were, nor their former grandour, and flowrishing, but still keep by themselves with some respect to their own land which their fathers did enjoy.

V. That piece of the Scripture which did concern the *declining times of the Church under the Old Testament*, what Jeremy foretold of the Babylonish captivity hath now many ages since been fulfilled, a truth which we have attested by sacred history, an history which doth clearly justify it self, and its authority by such convincing marks thereof, that we may say, these who do seriously converse with the word, cannot take up Atheisme without the laying down of reason, and putting a force upon their own light.

Now as to this particular prophecy we would but seriously consider.

1. That which Jeremy did foretell anent the captivity, was not its accomplishment put on record in a book of the Churches lamentations? Where this truth may be read in her teares, and truely such as ever knew grief in a high measure, may easily know what is there expreſt to be ſad earneſt, and read the lively motions of an afflicted caſe therein, and beſides hath not this been witneſſed to after ages by a viſible monument, even the deſtruction of the Temple, that great and excellent work, which though after rebuilt did never attain its former ſplendour.

2. This was a matter of fact of great note, and famous in the time, done in the view of all the nations, a conſiderable piece of the Babylonish conqueſt, yea that teſtimony the Scripture beareth to the ſame, was it not a few ages after made publick to other parts of the world by the Septuagint tranſlation, ſo that it had been eaſy for Ptolemy or any in that time to have diſcovered the falſehood of a thing ſo lately done, yet, theſe times nor the moſt profeſſed enemies to the Church therein, could not in the leaſt contradict the ſame.

3. Though much of humane hiſtory, and theſe records of auncient times that we now have, are both corrupt and defective, yet, there wants not ſome conſent, from the ſureſt of theſe, to many of the moſt obſervable things that we have of the hiſtory of the old teſtament, and as to the certainty of this truth beſids its own authority, we will find ſome of theſe oldeſt writers Beroſus, Herodot, and Xenophon, give ſome light to the ſame, whoſe witnes the Atheiſt cannot challenge; yea, is it not clear that Ioſephus not onely from ſacred hiſtory but from theſe old

old records, & fragments of former times which were then extant (though since have been much lost) compose his Iewish antiquities, which give so particular a relation of this truth.

VI. What was foretold by Daniel concerning *the rise, and fall of the Monarchies*, and change of these great Empires, which had been so sore a rod upon the Church, hath it not many ages past had a most punctual performance? It is now long since that great Image shewed to the prophet in a vision, hath been brought down, and broken, so that scarse the toes thereof doe now remain, which besides the Scripture, may be clearly demonstrat upon other rational grounds.

1. It being granted that the Prophecy of Daniel was translated in Greek, and laid up in that great library of Alexandria, long before much of it was fulfilled, before Antiochus Epiphanes, and the rising of the Roman Empire, of which Porphyrius could not be ignorant, though all he could answer to that evident agreement betwixt his Propheſie and the event, was that it must have been writ after these things were accomplished, whilest it is clear, that a part of the Prophecie of Daniel which concerned the fourth Monarchy, was not even in his times fully made out, ye we must say something thereof doth reach to the last end of time.

2. It is also undenyable that in these great revolutions of the Monarchies there is a discernable consent and harmony betwixt the Scripture, and these ancient records which we yet have of these times, so that not only the things themselves, but some of the most observable circumstances thereof which are particularly mentioned by Daniel, we may

may read in Xenophon, Herodot, and Diodorus Siculus.

3. It must also be granted that somethings which in Daniels Prophesie would seem most strange, and improbable, such as Belshazars death in that very night the hand writing was shewed to him, may be particularly understood in Xenophons history, how Cyrus took the advantage of the Babylonian security whilest they were in the midst of a solemn Feast, and by diverting the channel of Euphrates did enter the city without opposition; also how that great horn of the high goat was so suddenly broken and the coming up of four in his room, which by Daniel are expounded of the Grecian Monarchy, and the dividing of that Empire after Alexanders death, is it not punctually held forth by all the histories of that time.

4. Was there not a very convincing appearance of a divine hand, both in the rise, and fall of these Monarchies & an extraordinary providence which we cannot but see when we read these histories, that surely something above ordinary meanes, and second causes was both in Cyrus conquest against the Babylonians, and the marvellous swift progresse, and successe of Alexander against the Persians.

VII. That which was the great scope of all Prophesies under the Old Testament. *The coming of the Messias* is surely verified, and now many ages past hath had an accomplishment, the Lord is come unto his Temple even he whose day Abraham, and the Saints under the law did long after; this was the most happy, and notable crisis that ever the Church was under, the great Epocha, and period of time from which she doth now reckon, which we know is

is no fable, or cunning device of man, that God was manifested in the flesh, did make his abode for some time in the earth, suffered at Jerusalem in the view of the World, before many witnesses, did arise from death on the third day, was seen, and known by his Disciples thereafter, and having finished the work for which he came was received up again into glory.

This is indeed a great truth which concerneth us no lesse to know, and be sure of, then our soul is worth, and intereſt through eternity, the fulfilling whereof besides the authority of sacred writ, the witnes, and records of the Evangelists, and Apostles of Jesus Christ who testify what they certainly knew, is a truth which from such convincing tational grounds may be demonstrated, that the greateſt height of Atheisme knoweth not how to state it selfe in a direct opposition to the same; and truly in this we may say the Lord hath so tendered the strengthning of his peoples faith and their encouragement, that as it is the most concerning promise of the Scripture, on which our whole hope, and blessednes depends, so is it also most clear, and conspicuous in the event: I shal but only touch this, whereof so much hath been said by others.

1. It is undeniable the Messias was to come, to whom all the sacrifices under the Law these auncient types, and shadowes did clearly point, to whom the Prophets bear witnes, and was the faith of the auncient Iewish Church, of which promise they were perswaded, even whileſt they saw it but a far, yet did embrace, and repose themselves thereon, and is there not a most clear, and exact portraicture drawn forth under the Old Testament, of the Messias, what an one he should be, and by what peculiar charac-

ters

ters he should be known, who was to be revealed to Israel.

2. The special season, and period of time wherein Christ should come, we find prefixed, and shewed to the auncient Church, which though under some figurative expressions seemed then dark, yet, was so far revealed that upon a diligent search, and enquiry, and particular collation of the times, it might be easy to discern the Messias coming, and near approach; of which salvation the Prophets did enquire, 1 *Pet.* 1. *ver.* 10. and truely the fall of the Monarchies, and right uptaking of Daniels weeks, were sure, and solide grounds, for a clear computation thereanent; thence was it that so general an expectation of the Messias was among the Iewes, at that very time when he came, so as divers impostors did arise whom the People was ready to follow, and we see with what amazement the Pharisees did inquire at Iohn the Baptist if he were the Christ, or not; yea, Josephus sheweth how the perswasion of this did most excite that People to war with the Romans from the prophecies they had in holy writ, that from Judea should about that time come who was to be Emperour of the World,

3. It is also sure there was such an one, who in the dayes of Tiberius, and under the reign of Herod was made manifest to Israel; and came with no outward shew, and observation, but did great, and marvellous things before all the People; was crucified at Jerusalem, under Pontius Pilate, and notwithstanding the ignominy of his death was after adored, and followed, both by many of the Iews and the gentils, whose doctrine did also in short time spread through the World, a truth which the greatest adversaries of the Gospel have ever confessed, and do

attest

atteſt the hiſtory thereof de facto, to be a faithful relation, not only Iewes, but the heathen writers Suetonius, Tacitus, and Plinius the younger that lived near, and ſome of them contemporary with the times of the Apoſtles, do witnes that this Jeſus vvhom the Chriſtians worship, did truely ſuffer in the time of Pilats jurisdiction over the Jevves.

4. Is it not clear how this appearance of Chriſt to the World, did exactly tryſt with the very time, foretold by the Prophets thereanent? Was not Jacobs prophecy thus accomplished? for until that time it is clear the royal line of Davids houſe did not ceaſe, until Herod a ſtranger came to reign, by whom it was utterly cut off, and it is manifeſt theſe 70 weeks mentioned by Daniel, muſt be underſtood of years elſe they could admit no other ſence, which reckoning from the decree, given out by Cyrus, to rebuild the temple, are 490 Yeares, and doth anſwer to the very time of Chriſt being in the World, and his death, which neceſſarly falls in the laſt of theſe weeks, a thing ſo manifeſt, that Porphyrius an avowed enemy to the Chriſtian Religion could have no anſwer, but that this prophecy had been deviſed after the event, which I am ſure the Iewes, though its direct adverſaries, would be loath to admit.

5. It is moſt clear that in him who at that time was revealed to Iſrael, whom the Chriſtian Church doth this day worship, was exactly accomplished whatever was by the Prophets told concerning the Meſſias, and it is no ſmall advantage for the Chriſtian cauſe, that it needs but appeal to theſe records, vvhich have been keept, in the hands of her adverſaries, where there is ſo clear a portraicture of him held forth, as to his perſon, his way of coming

the

the place whence, the entertainment he should ge
and his death, that I must think it a contradiction t
reason, how men should acknowledge the Old Te
tament, and not grant the New; since, it is cle
the Jewes look for no other Messias, then such an on
as is held out by the Prophets, and they acknow
ledge also the divine authority of Esay, Daniel
Micah, Malachi. &c. who do, by such cle
marks point him forth, and shew the Church ho
they should know him when he cometh; for true
it may thence appear, that it is not more certain th
Messias should come, then that Jesus Christ is he:
would but seriously ask what do the Iewes this da
misse in our blessed Lord Iesus, which the Old Tes
ment alloweth them to expect in the Messias, is i
that he came not with outward shew, and glory,
sure according to the Scripture, such an one we ough
not to acknowledge; no, should he not be of th
seed of the woman, 2. Gen. who should be bor
of a virgin as Esay shewveth, his voice not heard i
the streets, despised and rejected of men, a man o
sorrowes? Such an one, as was shadowed out under
the Law, who should be made a sacrifice for sin
yea, come vvith no outward pomp, but meek, and
lovvly, and riding upon an asse, was to be betrayed
and sold, and his price shevved by Zach. for 30
pieces; a crucified dying Christ that should be wou
ded in the house of his friends, and cut off from
amongst the children of his People, O! can men
possibly deny so clear an accomplishment of these i
our blessed Lord?

6. Is is not undeniable that the Ievves now in their
present case, cannot possibly expect the accomplish
ment of this promise, that the Messias cannot this
day come, according to the Scripture, except they
could

could be put in such a condition, as they were then at Christs coming; certainly it is impossible, that the Old Testament be ever fulfilled anent this, if it be not already, can he come forth out of Bethlehem whilst now no such place is known by that name? can he come into his Temple that is utterly destroyed; is there not now a subversion of the Tribes, and the family of David not known, at this day? Yea, are not the gentils brought in, whom Isai sheweth should be gathered under the standard of the Messias? doth not the daily sacrifice cease? which the Iewes will confesse hath been for many ages, and this was to be after his coming, and I would ask how was that ever fulfilled, that the glory of the second Temple should exceed the glory of the first? for this cannot be on the account of its structure, or outward magnificence; sure there is nothing, wherein this glory could appear, but as it points at Christ, and the breaking up of that glorious light, which was before its destruction.

7. There is an innumerable company who have embraced the Gospel, and received the spirit by the ministry thereof since the times of the Apostles who have put this seal thereto in all ages that it is the power, and wisdome of God, and truely without partial respect (which the conscience of the worst of men have been forced to justify) it may be said, these were the excellent of the earth in their time, many of greatest outward parts and abilities, whose moral integrity and candour was beyond question even with their adversaries, and these both of Iewes, and gentils of all ranks of men, of all nations, and languages, who not only by a naked profession, but by their walk, and sufferings did shew forth the power, and vertue of a crucified Christ, yea, shine as

lights whileſt they were in the World to the conviction of onlookers, and is not this a convincing witnes to the truth of the Goſpel which its enemies cannot poſſibly deny.

8. That excellent doctrine delivered to the Church in the New Teſtament by Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, doth it not clearly shew whence it is, and witnes its own authority? For here we may ſee a manifeſt agreement betwixt this and the doctrine of the auncient Iewish Church, that as the five Books of Moſes hold forth the ſum of the Goſpel, the Covenaut of grace, and that myſtery of Salvation by Chriſt, ſo the Prophets do carry it on with further clearnes, and the Evangeliſts bring forvvard like an excellent edifice that is founded, and advanced in the one, but perfected in the other, all breathing the ſame ſpirit with a convincing tendency to the ſame end, ſo that we may ſay the old Jewes, under the Law, were in effect Chriſtians, and the followers of Chriſt now under the Goſpel in ſome reſpect are Jewes, being one in the ſubſtantials of their religion; for it is clear, that poor Apoſtat people, now in the Jewiſh nation, hath wholly departed from their own doctrine, and will not come to the light that they may be judged according to the Old Teſtament; now in this I would ſeriouſly atteſt the adverſaries of the Goſpel, if paganiſme, the Turks Alcoran, or Jewish Talmud hold forth any ſuch doctrine, or rule, as that which the Chriſtian Religion doth, ſuch pure, and excellent precepts to reſtrain the inordinancy of corrupt affection backed with arguments becoming an immortal ſoul, a doctrine ſo ſincere, ſolid, and rational ſo conſiſtent with it ſelfe, and agreable to the true ſcope, and driſt thereof, which holds

holds forth, the moſt exquiſite rule of perfection, for men to preſſe after, yea, where every page, and line breatheth forth holines towards God, & righteouſnes and humanity towards man.

9. I ſhall adde, theſe clear convincing evidences of the truth of the Goſpel, which did attend the firſt publiſhing thereof were ſo evident, and undeniable ſeal from the Lord as may force the greateſt Atheiſt to ſilence, for. 1. They were Jewes as much concerned in the Religion of their Fathers as any, who did firſt publiſh the Goſpel, none more zealous according to the Law then Paul was before his converſion, none alſo could challenge their driving an outward intereſt hereby, ſince perſecution, and bonds, yea, greateſt hazard was that which they could expect. 2. It is clear they walked by no rule of human policy, nor theſe ordinary wayes of inſinuation, which the World doth uſe, to engadge men, and make a party to themſelves, but did deliver the truth, truth moſt repugnant to the flesh, and that intereſt, with greateſt candour, and ſimplicity, though likewiſe with a convincing authority, and confidence, yea, came with a meſſage to the World, which had no other convoy, or perſwading argument, but the evidence of its own truth, but withal, ſuch a power accompanying the ſame, before which men could not ſtand. 3. What is published concerning Chriſt by the Evangeliſts, the great works he did, his dying at Jeruſalem with all the ſtupendious circumſtances thereof, and ſigns from Heaven was not a thing done in a corner, but in the publick view of men, which in theſe dayes was moſt notour, and famous, but yet there cannot be produced, one contradictory teſtimony to the truth of theſe relations, by any adverſary of the Goſpel, either at that time,

or since; sure the World wanted no malice, and these great things were early published, by the Evangelists, and Apostles, whilest much of that generation was alive, yet, it is clear, though in a matter of that concernment, which made then so great a noise, and was at that time putting the earth all in a flame, none was found, either among Jewes or gentils, who could, or durst put forth a manifest to discover the least cheat, or falshood, in these things attested in the History of the Gospel. 4. What ever different partyes, and sects, did break up with the first time of the Church, to oppose the truth in other things, yet, in this they had all one consent, that he who was crucified at Jerusalem, was the Messias, and Christ, which truely, did witnes the clear irresistible manifestation of this truth in these times, since if there could have been the last ground to challenge any imposture, or deceit, in this great foundation of the Christian faith, it is more then probable, these bitter contentions followed with such animosity, and heat, and irritation of these whom the Apostles and Church in that time, did with much zeal, and sharpest censures pursue, would have engadged them to put all the disgrace upon the truth which they could, if they might have had where to fasten their teeth; I would further adde, that even the arguments and objections, which the adversaries of the Gospel could ever bring to oppose the same, are indeed a convincing witness, and confirmation, and shew how little they could any way say, in giving their malice a vent, we find that absurd alledgeance of the Jewes that the great works Christ did in the dayes of his flesh were by stealing the name Iehovah out of the temple, which they alleadge he sewed up in his thigh, which truely needeth no further refutation but the reciting thereof.

and,

and here they are even forced to witnes the truth of these relations held forth by the Evangelists as to the matter of fact, which we find also these later Atheists such as Vanninus, Cardan, &c. dare not challenge, or debate, onely they would ascribe these great works which Christ then wrought, to the influence of the starres, a challenge so absurd, that needs no other answer but to relate it.

VIII. We have that remarkable Prophecy of *the incoming of the Gentils*, a truth indeed great, and marvellous, which as it is expresly held forth in the Old Testament, yea, is there mentioned, *Is.* 54. *ver.* 1. 2. *Is.* 60. *ver.* 3. 9. is a thing so clearly novv written forth in the event, that I am sure, the greatest Athists can have no shift here, that in this strange work of God about his Church, the Scripture hath an undeniable accomplishment. Now to clear this let us but consider.

1. That for many ages this truth anent the incalling of the gentils was sealed up in a prophecy, a thing so great, and astonishing to the auncient Iewish Church that they could not well comprehend the same, until once the event brought it forth, for this was indeed a mystery hid from ages, how the Gentiles should be fellow-heires, of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ, when the bounds, and extent of the Church did not exceed Iudea that small inclosure, whileſt the whole World beside did did ly buried like an out field in dark paganisme for it is well known that the most pleasant places of Africa, Asia, and Europa, where afterwards many famous Churches were, vvithin these 1600 yeares was but a savage wildernes, Britain, Germanie, and France, did then vvorship the sun, and starres, they sacrified

to the Gods of the heathens, yea, theſe eaſterm partes, on which the ſun did firſt riſe did not then know the God of Iſrael, a truth which not only the Roman, and Grecian Hiſtories, but the records of particular Nations can clearly atteſt.

2. It is clear that this prophecy was not held forth in a general; but we find the time alſo prefixed (with other ſpecial circumſtances) when it ſhould have its accomplishment at the appearing of the Meſſias, he ſhould be revealed to Iſrael, before which time a bar was drawn in the way of the Nations, and a wall of partition betwixt them, and the Church, until he ſtand up who ſhould hold forth an enſign to the People, and gather the Gentils under his ſtandard, which Eſay doth clearly ſhew, *Eſ.* 11. *v.* 10. *and* 34. *ver.* 1. 2. *and* 60. *ver.* 1, *&c.* and then muſt the mountaines flow down at his preſence, Nations be born at once; yea, the light break forth to the Eaſt, and the Weſt, then ſhould the Children of the deſolat be moe then of the maried wife, when this time, even the ſet time for the gentils is once come; and it may be very convincing, which is moſt obſervable, that notwithſtanding of a more flowrishing condition of the Iewish Church in former ages, yvhen her grandour, and proſperity was more tempting, and the neighbourhood, and commerce which the Nations about had with that People, yea, thoughby the captivity they were ſcattered, among the Perſians, and Babylonians, yet was there no ſuch ſtir, or change of the World, until the appointed time once came.

3. It may be eaſy to prove the event of this prophecy, and its manifeſt accomplishment, even at the time thereof, for this men can not deny, that the Lord did viſit the Gentils with the know ledge

ledge of his truth, which then cauſed ſuch a change in the earth, as a great part of it hath been brought from heathnish idolatry to worship the God of Iſrael, and ſuch who once were ſtrangers, and aliens, now made to profeſſe the ſame faith (as to the ſubſtance thereof) of the auncient Jewish Church; ſure this truth needs not want a witnes, whileſt Nations, and much of the knowvn World hath been for ſo long a time, and yet to this day are a viſible proof thereof, a truth of ſuch concernment that in former ages made a great and ſtupendious change upon the face of the earth, ſo that not onely an innumerable company out of all Nations, and languages, but the generality, the very complex body of Kingdoms, and Nations can bear witnes thereto, and now the Goſpel hath been preached through much of the World, yea, we may ſay, few parts thereof, where there hath not been ſome face of a Church, though the promiſe hath not yet had its full accomplishment, but we wait for (according to the Scripture) a more flowrishing time, and great harveſt among the Nations, when Iſrael ſhall be gathered, how ever it is ſure the Lord hath in a great part fulfilled this his promiſe, ſo that the Church might then with aſtonishment cry out, who hath begotten all theſe Children, who are theſe that flee as a cloud, like the doves to their windowes? O bleſſed day, in which the light did firſt break up on the poor ofſpring of Iaphet who then dwelt in the shadow, and region of death. O bleſt day that brought ſalvation with it to the gentils, wherein the Lord did viſit theſe dark places of the earth, which were full of the habitations of cruelty, I think the ſenſe of ſo great a mercy, ſhould never let us want an earand for giving

thanks, yea, put much to silence our other complaints.

4. Is it not only as to the time, but these very places of the earth which Esai, and other of the Prophets did particularly point at, this promise had an exact accomplishment? For it is this day manifest the isles which we find so frequently mentioned, that these should wait for his law, and the uttermost parts of the earth, whence he should bring the Daughter of his dispersed, may give a clear commentary upon the same, from what the Lord hath done to Britain, and Ireland with other remote parts of the earth, yea, hath not Æthiopians been made to stretch out their hands, even in these sun-burnt places of Africk, hath not Christ also had a conquest, where many a black moore was through grace made as the snow of Salmon, and the feathers of a dove, so that it is clear how these particular places, which were so oft pointed at by the Prophets have been visited by the Gospel, and fallen to the share of the Church.

5. This change which by the incoming of the gentils to the Church was wrought upon the Earth, is a thing so great, and astonishing, that were it still in the promise, and this not yet fulfilled, it would truely stagger our faith, how such a thing should ever come to passe, and is there not here a miracle, that the World cannot possibly deny? Even this great work of God in bringing in of the gentils, which without an extraordinary power, could not be effectuat, if men will consider. First. That swift progresse which then the Gospel had, how it did run, and was glorified through the furthest parts of the earth, and like a lightning break forth from one place to another, so that in the Apostles time, the Scripture doth shew, how most of the conspicuous Provin-

ces

ces of Asia, had received the Gospel, and Tertullian who lived in the second Century, in his Book *contra judæos* doth there witnes how many nations, and these most remote from other, Parthians, Medes, Armenia, Phrygia, Cappadocia, Pontus and Pamphilia, with much of Egypt, and diverse parts of Africk, besides Rome, Spain, and other places of Europe, were in his time almost wholly Christian; for it is indeed clear that the bounds of the Church was then of a larger extent then it is now at this day. 2. It is also undeniable that in this solemn day of the Gospels spreading amongst the nations, suffering, and persecution did all that time attend the Church, yea, in such a measure that as the writers of these times do witnes neither famine pestilence, nor the sword, did destroy so many of the World, as then were of Christians in the two first centuries put to death for adhering to the truth, and it is clear, that this great work of God in such a swift spreading of the Church, was most discernable in these times of hotteſt persecution, yea then was her most effectual grouth, and increase, which upon her getting some rest, and beginning to flowrish with external peace, was at a visible stand. 3. How marvellous a thing was this, to be brought about, if we consider the many different languages, that did then stop correspondence between the Church and the rest of the earth, for how could the truth thus spread among the nations, yea, in such remote places of the World Churches be planted by the Apostles, and have the Scripture translated, and made legible to them without that extraordinary gift of tongues, which for that end was then given from the Lord? Sure beside sacred authority anent this, reason may convincingly witnes to the World the

of such a miracle. 4. How strange, and wonderful a change was this, that in so short a time the Gospel should thus enlighten, and put such a lustre on the most rude, and savage places of the earth, where scarse humanity had been, and bring them from the condition of beasts to men, should thus tame, and civilize the greatest Barbarians, and cause the lion to ly down with the lamb, yea, by the preaching of that Gospel, and of a crucified Christ, which as it was to the Jewes a stumbling block, so to the Greeks foolishnes.

And in a word was not this indeed a miracle how in a matter of such high concernment as that wherein mens soul, and everlasting interest lay they should be turned off their old way, and religion, in which they and their Fathers had been so long rooted, and that a little spark which did break up in Iudea should bring down the idols of the nations, and burn up their temples.

Alace that there is so little of a large heart, of that primitive zeal, and fervour this day among Christians for the enlargment of the Church, that such merchants are now rare who would venture out to trade with other parts, for this excellent ware, the merchandise whereof is better then of gold. O that in these parts where the truth is known & professed, the Lord would raise up men of such a spirit, & such a Magistrat, who would make it their work, and lay down solid grounds how to advance the Kingdome of Christ in the dark places of the earth, and reckon their interest in a forrain plantation upon the account of the Gospel, no lesse then on the account of trade; we would pray, and yet hope for this.

IX. What we find foretold by Daniel, yea, by Christ himself anent *the destruction of Ierusalem, and ceasing*

ceasing of the Iewish dayly sacrifice with the rejection of that people, *Dan.* 12. *ver.* 11. *Math.* 24. *ver.* 2. hath many ages past come to passe, wherein the World may see how clearly the event doth answer this Prophecy, for it is manifest.

1. That this is a truth which doth need no other witnes, then the scattered remnant, and desolate ruines of that once flowrishing Church, and nation of the Iewes which we see with our eyes at this day, whose present state is so great a monument of divine judgment, so clear a witnes to the Scripture that I think men cannot look thereon, if they be in any measure serious, but must have such a conviction.

2. What hath befallen this people may it not be an astonishment to the World in all succeeding ages? a stroke that hath put them in a more sad condition, then any nation, or people we ever yet heard of, that cast them out of their own land, scattered them as vagabonds through the earth, so that these many ages they have had no scepter nor law-giver, no piece of the earth they can call their own, but at the mercy, and arbitrary disposal of every place they reside in, no priviledge, or liberties but a naked permission to brook their lives and estates during the pleasure of these under whom they get shelter, a people put by themselves with a visible mark of divine wrath upon them, like a beacon set up for all the nations to look on, even these who were once eminently owned of the Lord, who was knovvn in their palaces for a refuge, yea, it is very manifest that no stir or essay that ever they made for their releef, but vvas still to their further ruin, and found Gods hand visibly crosse to them therein; sure Ammianus Marcellinus, a heathen vvriter did intend no testimony to the Christian cause in relating that strange passage which neer his time fell

out

out how the Jewes by Julians warrant, and permiſſion did attempt to build the Temple again, but a fire breaking up from the foundation thereof, which deſtroyed many of the workmen, forced them with much terrour to deſiſt.

3. Muſt it not be ſome ſtrange, and dreadful provocation, beyond the ſin of their forefathers, whereat ſo ſtrange, and unuſual a ſtroke doth point? Whileſt it is clear that notwithſtanding frequent Idolatry, and departing from God when they vvere at that height in vvickednes to offer up their children to Molech, and ſet up altars in the groves, to reject the meſſage of the Prophets, and thruſt ſome of them in a dungeon, yet, vvere only punished vvith 70 yeares captivity, and after by Gods very immediat hand brought again, theſe vvho had taken them captive concurring vvith them to rebuild the Temple: But novv hovv long and dark hath their night been ſince this judgment came on them, and though they could not theſe many ages charge themſelves vvith Idolatry, yet no ſaviour or deliverer hath been raiſed up, no Prophet ſent forth, no ſign or appearance at this day of releef, novv for theſe 1600 years, yea amidſt theſe frequent changes and reſolutions that have been in the World no change in their condition, ſure if that people vvere in ſpeaking tearmes vvith their conſciences, this might put them to a ſtrange demurr, vvhat ſhould be the cauſe if they be not guilty of killing the Meſſias, and that blood purſuing them; vvhat atrocious provocation beyond others they can condeſcend on, for vvhich the Lord doth ſo long and ſo ſore by ſuch an unuſual, and unheard of ſtroke thus contend.

4. What a marvellous concurrence of providence, and convincing appearance of a divine hand was in this judgement

judgement, the beſieging of Jeruſalem by the Romans tryſted with the very time of the paſſover whileſt ſo great a confluence of people from all parts of the land were there on that account, that both ſword, and famine might contribute their help to deſtroy; what unreaſonable and aſtonishing obſtinacy againſt all offers of peace, and the moſt preſſing inſinuations thereof which Titus Veſpaſian made, even whileſt their ruin was otherwiſe unevitable, an unheard of ſtrife where the enemy did contend to ſave, but they to undoe themſelves, how judicially hardened, under moſt remarkable prodigies, and warnings which they had of that approaching deſolation, divided wholly amongſt themſelves, yea, ſo cruel one upon another within, that their adverſary without could not but look thereon with compaſſion. O what a ſtroke was this wherein greateſt Atheiſts would grant a fatality, for indeed men cannot conſider the ſame without acknowledging a divine hand & ſomething above ordinary meanes, and cauſes, where all did thus meet together in a ſolemn tryſt to accomplish that peoples ruin.

5. But it is here we may ſee a ſingular providence of God for his Church, that theſe who of all the World are moſt violent enemies to the Chriſtian truth, are alſo a moſt convincing witnes to the ſame, whileſt, firſt, theſe do clearly atteſt the Scripture (which is our alone charter) the divine authority of Moſes, and the Prophets, the true copyes whereof, they did moſt tenderly preſerve what ever abſurd gloſſes ſome of their Rabbies have thereon; yea, durſt never offer in the leaſt to vitiat the original, but have had the ſame tranſmitted, ſtill from one age to an other, to which records that are this day in their hand, the Chriſtian Church can with much confi-

denc

dence appeal, & demonſtrat from the Old Teſtament the undoubted truth of the New. Yea, in this we may appeal the Atheiſt to his conſcience that the Scripture is no impoſture, or any cunning device of Chriſtians which is ſo far witneſſed even by the greateſt adverſary, and maligners of the Chriſtian Religion. 2. That ſtrange induration of the Jewes, their unreaſonable rejecting of the truth, who after ſo long a time cannot ſee the cauſe which is moſt diſcernable in their ſtroke. O is not this alſo a moſt convincing ſeal to the Scripture, and clear fulfilling thereof there is a vail over their mind as the Apoſtle sheweth, whileſt they read the Law, judicially ſmitten by the Lord with blindnes, that they cannot ſee until once this vail be taken off, and truely we may ſay there is nothing in their judgement more ſtrange and aſtonishing then ſuch a continued obſtinacy againſt the truth, how they should be thus dark in the noon day, but that herein the Scripture is fulfilled; ſo that we may even turn a poiſon unto an antidot.

X. That vvhich is ſo expreſly foretold in the Nevv Teſtament, yea, is the great drift of the Prophecies thereof, *The coming of Antichriſt, and revealing of the man of ſin to the World*, 2 *Theſſ.* 2: *ver.* 3. 4. 7. 8. 9. hath long ſince been accomplished, vvherein vve may ſay the vvonderful correſponding of the event vvi-h the prophecy is ſo clear, that this truth is novv as plain, and obvions as once it vvas dark to the Church, theſe things being undeniable.

1. Hovv the Spirit of God in the Scripture hath been in a more then ordinary vvay particular, to point Antichriſt forth by ſuch notour marks, and characters, that afrer ages may knovv him, if they vvill not shut their eyes, I confeſſe it is not ſtrange the popish party should ſeal up the Scripture, and forbid the

the ordinary reading of it, ſince the breaking forth of that light vvould ſoon make their Kingdome dark, for if men vvould but ſet the hiſtory of the Church ſince the times of the Apoſtles, over againſt the Scripture, and make uſe of that notable key for opening up the prophecies of the Nevv Teſtament, it ſhould be then eaſy to knovw, the Antichriſt is ſurely come, and who this is, and herein doth the Lords tender reſpect to his Church appear, that he doth not only in a very ſolemn manner forewarn men, anent this great trial, and as it vvere by the ſound of a trumpet give an alarum, that ſuch an adverſary vvas coming, yea of the time thereof, vvho vvould do more hurt, then all vvho had gone before, but doth alſo make ſo clear a diſcovery of the vvhole fabrick, riſe, and progres of that party, vvith ſuch particular circumſtances and differencing characters from any other enemy of the Church, as may render the World moſt inexcuſable, if they vvill needs dash on that rock, vvhereon the Scripture hath ſet ſo conſpicuous a beacon.

2. That this Propecy ſhould novv vvant an accompliſhment or Antichriſt be yet to come is a thing moſt repugnant to ſacred truth, ſince it is ſure, that myſtery of iniquity even in the times of the Apoſtles did begin to vvork, and who then for a time vvithheld his coming, the heathen Empire of Rome, hath long ſince been taken out of the way, which cauſed ſome Chriſtians in theſe dayes wish the ſtanding, and continuance of that Empire, from the terrour they had of that adverſary who according to the word they knew was to fill his room, yea, do we not find the Churches trial from Antichriſt ſhould be the moſt fierce, and laſting trial of the Church under the New Teſtament, which after her begun breathing from heath

heathnish perſecution, was to continue for many ages wherein the word is moſt expreſſe, and clear, that the riſe, and fall of this enemy should be gradual, and not at once whoſe beginning, and firſt appearance might be traced to the firſt times of the Church, and his cloſe, and finall ruin near the ſecond coming of Chriſt, by the brightnes whereof he shall be deſtroyed, and therefore, this is ſo much the ſubject of the Prophecies of the New Teſtament, the great intent, and ſcope of the Revelation of John, in which, the true ſtate of the ChriſtianChurch, with the various changes of her condition, even from the opening up of the firſt ſeal to the blowing of the laſt trumpet, is particularly held forth, and there may we all alongſt trace the ſteps of the riſe, and fall of that man of ſin.

3. That ſuch an one as the Scripture points forth, doth moſt fully anſwer to all theſe marks which are there given of Antichriſt, hath come, and been revealed to the World, is a thing ſo very manifeſt that except men will needs force their light, and conſcience, it cannot but be beyond queſtion, and debate, even ſuch an one whoſe coming should be after the working of Satan with all power, ſignes, and lying wonders, forbidding to marry, and to abſtain from meats which God had appointed, who ſitteth in the temple of God, having a name full of blaſphemy, and doth exalt himſelf above all that is called God, who bewitcheth the Kings, and great men of the earth with his enchantements, yea, even by his livery may he be knovvn that he moſt uſually hath ſcarlet, and purple, which I think truely marvellous hovv particularly theſe are mentioned in the Scripture; and in a word, ſuch an one whoſe traffick, and merchandize, is not only gold, and ſilver but the

the ſouls of men, who ſhould be drunk with the blood of the Saints, and Martyres of Jeſus Chriſt, under whoſe reign the Church muſt flee to the wildernes, and there be latent for a long time, and his ſeat, that City which is ſituat upon ſeven hills, even that great city which doth rule over the Kings of the earth. O ſtrange hovv men can acknowledge this for the Scripture of God, and yet not ſee it fulfilled before their eyes, that there is ſo vive an image, and portraicture of Antichriſt there held forth, ſuch peculiar characters which do convincingly point at the Pope, and popiſh hierarchy, yea could anſvver to no other adverſary which Chriſt ever had under the New Teſtament either Pagan, or Mahumetan, and yet ſo much of the World doth not knovv him when he is before their eyes.

4. It is clear that no age ſince Antichriſt was revealed, did altogether vvant ſome witnes, to point him forth, even in the darkeſt times, many of vvhom loved not their lives unto the death, that they might ſeal this truth, & it may be a queſtion if more of the blood of the Saints was shed under heathens then in after times under Antichriſt, yea, though we had not ſuch expreſſe marks to diſcover him from the vvord, it may be eaſy for men to judge, who that is, who is this day ſo directly oppoſite to Jeſus Chriſt, and the great deſign of the Goſpel, that aſſumes to himſelf vvhat is alone due to God, to forgive ſin, and be vvorshipped vvith Religious adoration, doth challenge a Magiſterial povver, and ſupremacy, over the vvhole Church as its head, a ſtile too great for any of the Angels, vvho maketh void the merit of Chriſt, and layeth dovvn a vvay of life, and ſalvation, on the ſame terms that it ſtood in the Covenant of works, doth deſtroy the great intent of the Goſ-

pel, and in effect denyeth Jesus Christ to have come in the flesh, who setteth Heaven upon sale for money, and permitteth none to perish and goe to hell, but the poore, doth dispense with grosse acts of sin and the expres commands of the Law-giver, maketh morall prohibitions void by his authority, yea, halloweth the very stewes, and most horrid acts of uncleanes, taketh on him to change the condition of the dead, and ensure to their friends the happy state of their souls, if they will make large offerings on that account, O! who is this, is not that Antichrist, whose way doth state him in such direct tearmes of opposition to Christ?

5. Have we not cause to wonder no lesse at the strange induration and blindnes of the popish party, then of the Jewes, that whilest the one doth confesse the Old Testament, and yet knoweth not Christ, the other should grant the truth of the New Testament, and not know Antichrist, that he is come, even he after whom a great piece of the World, for these many ages hath been wondering? sure so clear an agreement betwixt this prophecy and the event may not only put this beyond debate, but leave a conviction, upon the greatest Atheists, of the truth, and divinity of the Scripture; for what ever former times might pretend ignorance whilest this mystery was but working, now when the man of sin hath comed to his full height, and stature, and so clearly revealed by the light of the Gospel, it taketh away all excuse, and I professe in these latter times, I cannot see how one can be a knowwing Papist, and not an Athiest also.

(¶) I know it is a sore judgment on men, who will not receive the truth, that the discoverie thereof should be their pain and torment, and I am sure what-

whatever advantages or outward peace, followers of antichrist have this day, they can have no sound sleep, whilst the light with that clearness doth shine, that they can neither stand before it, nor yet flee and escape, where their conscience will not follow; but O here is the scripture evidently fulfilled, and their judgment so farre begun, as it is held forth. Rev. 16. that the greater discoverie the light makes, the more they should rage, and in fury rise against it; for the heat of this cannot but scorch where it doth not warm, there is no help where God doth judicially harden men, no blindnes like that where they shut their eyes, and the righteous God makes it their plague by putting his seal to it: however wisdome must be justified of her children, the truth cannot loose its earand even when its effects are sad and judicial, for it is a sweet savour to God in them who perish: It is truly a sad sight, and there seems no access to convince, where malice at the way of the Lord turns men mad, yea cruel against themselves; but since the Popish Church do's not avowedly deny the scriptures divinity of the New Testament and prophesies thereof (which is the great advantage we require to have its authority admitted) and their Religion brought to this test, which is the alone rule of all true Religion, and since they must grant that to be joyned with Antichrist or partaker in such a way is most dreadful, and involves them under the greatest of judgments, for it is a mater of no less weight then an eternal salvation or damnation; yea since this concerns Ministers of the Gospel, as one special piece of their work now in the last times to bear witness against Antichrist (that great, we must say the greatest adversarie which Christ ever had in the earth) to warne and pursue with ou ceasing this call, what ever success it have, that-

men would come out of Babylon, and haſte from under an approaching wrath& vengeance,which on ſome other ground then appearance we are ſure now makes haſte; I would here in behalf of the truth offer ſome queries on this ſubject (beſides any thing hath been already mentioned) and herein appeal the adverſary to theScripture of God,that great &uncontroverted judg, to their conſcience,yea to the ſober & retired thoughts of ſuch,who are under any aw or impreſſion of a Deity,when they are alone with themſelves,if this ſo remarkable a Propheſy anent the Antichriſt & his coming be not now clearly verified,that men may ſee him with their eyes or elſe muſt shut them at ſuch a ſight.

1. Is there not a verie full and particular diſcoverie which theScripture gives of this great adverſarie both in his riſe, growth, his reigne and fall, and not by a paſſing word, whom the Apoſtle 2 Theſs. 2. 3. 4. points out by ſuch peculiar marks, whom John do's deſcrive and difference from all other Antichriſts that wereonly to be his forerunners & shewes him a more noted and principal adverſarie of Chriſt above others, yea, we have through the whole Revelation moſt clearly diſcovered under different ſtiles what he should be, and what a ſore and long trial the Chriſtian Church was to have under his reigne, I profeſs when I read the Scripture and there ſees ſo expreſs and clear a forewarning which many ages before we have anent the coming of this adverſarie, with ſuch peculiar diſtinguishing circumſtances and marks as are at this day moſt exactly verified in the event, I am conſtrain'd to admire at ſo convincing and unanſwerable a witneſs to the Scriptures divinity, and muſt think it ſtrange how men at ſuch a rate can wreſtle againſt the truth, except by getting a victorie over their conſcience and putting the light in fetters, whilſt

whilst they own these Propheſies of the new Teſtament to be of divine verity, which they ſo evidently diſtort againſt the clear ſenſe and meaning thereof; yea, do adventure ſuch a commentarie on the ſame, that manifeſtly deſtroy's the text.

2. Can you poſſibly expect *Antichriſt* his coming to the world now according to the Scripture, if he be not already revealed, when his forerunners were ſo many ages before, even in the times of the Apoſtles to shew he was then coming, I muſt ask, if this adverſary should this day begin to appear, could you judge this is he, or reconcile ſuch a contradiction how he is now breaking up who was beginning to diſcover himſelf 1500 years agoe, for it is ſo long ſince the Apoſtle shew'd this myſtery of iniquity was working 2. Theſſ. 2. 7. which clearly points at Antichriſt, who then was hatching, though not on ſuch a growth and aſcendant as after; and could he be yet latent, yet in the bud, hath there been no further advance after ſo many ages, hath this myſtery yet not wrought it ſelf above ground? O where hath he been? that ſuch a working thing, ſo dreadful a ſpark could keep ſo many ages under aſhes, and no flame, no fire perceived? for it is ſure if he was then at work, he hath not yet ceaſed; yea, if you admit the Scripture, is not the riſing of the Turkiſh Empire in the order of the trumpets clearly after the revealing of the Antichriſt, and this horrid ſcourg held forth Rev. 9. 20 as a remarkable judgment from the Lord, on the Chriſtian world then turn'd Antichriſtian for their idolatry, worshipping of images, &c. which was not brought in to the Church till the man of ſin was towards his height.

3. Is not this unanſwerably manifeſt that he who did withhold, and as a barr reſtrained Antichriſts

coming for a time, cannot now be standing in the way? You see the Scripture shew's expresly there is a barr must be removed, and then should this man of sin be revealed, and this cannot be doubted but that some temporal power was hereby meant which did then forcibly withstand as the original word κατεχων imports, for it is very clear whilst the Roman Empire was heathen, he could not brook Rome, or as a Monarch have his seat in that city with seven hills, he could not then both sit in the temple of God and have the Kings of the earth to give their power with consent to him: Now let me but appeal men to their reason and judgment if any such barr could be yet standing after so great, yea such innumerable mutations and changes of the world? when many ages since, there have been such various successions of States and Kingdomes, and a wearing out of greatest families, how any temporal povver could be since the dayes of the Apostles a continued let in the way of the adversary.

4. This query I would seriously offer, if such a party can be found the day to whom all the markes of Antichrist held forth by the Scripture do's truly agree, could you then deny he is come, if so be you looke for such an Antichrist, and under that cognisance, as the holy Ghost points him forth in the word? O will you be so much in earnest with your conscience as to suffer the truth come this neer, that you may impartially judge what is there of the Prophesies, that concerns Antichrist coming in the vvorld, which is not now verified in the event, before your eyes, and admit the Scripture but judge therein, whether there is any such particular distinguishing badge, and marke, held forth in that blessed record for his discovery, which do's

do's not convincingly quadrat with the Pope, and his followers.

5. I shall in this also appeal your conscience if there be novv or hath been under the nevv Testament an other party or such an adversary to the Church of Christ to whom these distinguishing characters of Antichrist could agree, such an one who should be no open adversary, but sit in the temple of God under the vail of a friend with a shew of great wonders and miracles, and yet under that shew exalt himself against God, I know you will deny that this hath a clear respect to the Popish party or is justly applicable to them, but I am sure if without a prejudicat byass, you would seriously judge, and abstract from application, in this you could not deny an assent that such a party, whosoever he be, bears that great badge of Antichrist, in exalting himself against God; who as a friend doth assume these titles, only due and competent to the glorious God, and to the Mediator, to be Head & chief Doctor of the Catholick Church, and aleadges her for his spouse, who chalengeth an infinite power by making use of that *Mat.* 28: v. 18. *All power is given unto me, &c.* which that book intituled Pontifical ceremonies do's assert. *Lib.* 1. fol. 36. who assumes an authority to bind mens conscience by his law, and to free their conscience from these laws which are divine and unchangable, who appoints divine worship and adoration to creatures, by directing prayers to them, do's subject the faith of the Church to the determination of a man, in which, as infallible, all must rest, is not that a dethroning of him, who is the great Prophet and teacher of his Church, yea, a making his authority voide; now beside these distinguishing characters, which the Scripture, so expressly gives of Antichrist; are not these also so

notoure and plain that I think it strange how men can have their reason and judgment in exercise, and not know to whom they belong: I mean the forbidding of marriage, and the use of meats which the Apostle holds forth 1 *Tim.* 4. 3. and *Rev.* 18. 13; you have there a merchandise with the souls of men, and O can any be in the dark who these are, who have such a peculiar traffick with this ware, by redeeming souls for money, and making a sale of pardons and indulgences which concern mens souls; I shall adde that likewyse *Rev.* 9. 20 the worshipping of idols of gold and silver, and herein crave the world to be judge, yea can appeale some of their own greatest writers if this be not both the doctrine and the practice of the Romish Church, which one of the most learn'd among them do's expresly assert, that the images of the Trinity are not set up for a shew but for Religious adoration, and is not this a most direct making void of the moral law, which so expresly forbids any worshipping of the invisible God under the similitude of a corruptible man, or under any visible representation.

6. Is not this foretold of Antichrist, what a dominion he should have over the Kings of the earth. *Rev.* 17. 18. unto whom they should agree and give their power and Kingdomes to support his interest; now if this be not convincingly verified, and hath been for many ages in the Pope, it is easy to judge; and I am sure his followvers vvould be loath to deny a thing, in vvhich they so much boast: I confess were it not thus foretold by the Scripture, we could not think it credible, how the Kings and great men of the earth should be in such a measure bewitched, to enslave themselves, and their interest to that party, and yeeld to so strange a subjection under their yoke, it

seems

seems so very irrational, yea like an infatuation, since they cannot but see under vvhat a terrour he keeps them by his interdictions, by assuming a power to loose subjects from any ty to their Princes, and thus binding and loosing their conscience at his pleasure, what interest he hath in their counsils, by that subtile device of auricular confession, what intollerable homage and service he requires from Princes, what vast treasure he draws for support of his Hierarchy from these places where he hath power; yea, vvhat a visible tendency his actings have to promote a worldly interest, and make the great men of the earth dependent on him; hovv easily he can dispense with the greatest breaches of the moral lavv, whilst most cruel & inexorable in any thing that copes with his power and supremacy: O hovv astonishing might this blinde devoting of great men both themselves and their power, to the support of such an interest be, if we had not a clear resolution from the Scripture, that this is from the Lord, who hath put it in their heart, and so far gives them up in his secret judgment.

7. I must ask, is not that a convincing witness to the Scripture, and a clear argument for the Protestant reformed Church, which you so much object against her, that her condition for so many ages hath been lovv and abject, and did so little appear, vvhilst the Popish interest vvas resplendent and flowrishing; for it is sure such a long continued suffering, and latent condition of the Church under Antichrist is expressly foretold, wherein the witnesses should be put to prophesie in sackcloth, and the poor woman (which is meant of the Church) put to flee to the wildernes and be there hid, so that you cannot say the Church, and followers of Christ have been more low in these vvorst and darkest times, then the word

holds her out to be; yet, hath there been stil a succession and some witnesses for the truth, & the Church thus continued in all these times, which as one excellently sayes, was like a fresh river that made her way through that horrid lake of Antichristianisme without mixing therewith, and at last did break up gloriously.

8. Is not the Antichrist in a special way pointed out in the Scripture, by some proper marke, some visible sign and cognisance, which his followers should receive, for differencing them for any other partie, *Rev.* 13. 16. now in this I desire the World, and commonest observers, to judge if these many strange ceremonies, and rites of the Romish Church, their distinguishing signs, and badges, which they so much own, and indispensibly require, as visible characters of their profession, yea are so peculiar to that partie beyond others, do not convincingly quadrat with the Scripture herein, and most clearly verifie the same in the event, the World knows, and the ordinary way and practice of these can witnes that frequent use (oh a most horrid, idolatrous abuse) of the sign of the cross which not only in a special manner they take as a differencing badge of their partie from others, by so frequent a crossing of their forehead, and breast, and putting this as their mark on all they baptise, or receive by confirmation, but does ascribe also to it an effective and operative power, and as a charm or magical sign, makes use of it to effect things supernatural, to restrain sin, drive away the Devil; for thus they conjure spirits, thus they wear it in their rings, and pendiaries; yea is it not by them adored and worshiped, and made use of for the blessing and consecration of all other things sure this can be no matter of debate,

since

ſince it is ſo known and obvious, and that it is eaſy thus to diſcern a Roman Catholick, if he but avow his profeſſion, by ſuch a viſible ſign, and find him but by his mark; which that partie does purſue with greateſt fervour, and thereby correſpond and diſcover themſelves one to another.

I ſhall further adde, is not this the *Antichriſt*, whoſe name muſt be underſtood, and reckoned by the number thereof, which is the number of a man, *Rev.* 13. Laſt. *ver.* 1. It is true this ſeems very dark, & myſterious, and in ſtead of a more clear diſcoverie, might rather be judged a drawing a vail over this adverſary, but ſince we have the Scriptures expreſſe call and warrant, to make a ſerious inquiry and ſearch about its meaning, yea does not onlie hold it forth as duetie, but ſhews ſuch a thing is attainable, and may be underſtood, I ſhall deſire in humble ſobriety, without peremptory aſſerting, to offer ſome few thoughts on this Scripture, both as to its meaning, and how clearly the man of ſin is thus pointed out, and his name made known by the number thereof; anent which I humbly judge (and muſt therein crave liberty to differ from others, and theſe whoſe judgment I moſt highly reſpect) that this number as it is here ſet down is explicatory, and given as the very key to the Church, for opening up the myſtery of this name, and of that man of whom alſo it is the number, and thus ſhew's it is not to be reckoned as the name of a ſingle perſon, nor is it to be found by Arithmetick computation in the numeral letters of a man, but is the name of a politick body, a name which comprehends a plurality, ſuch as theſe numerous orders and degrees of the pontificall Hierarchy are, and by ſuch a ſcale, his number does remarkably aſcend in ſo many degrees, until it termi-

nat in

nat in a man even in one abſoluce Monarch, and univerſal Head, as the very Summa totalis in whom that whole number reſolves, and therefore it is the number of a man; yea by this reckoning we may thus clearly know, what a man that is, that as he cannot be known, if we take him alone, without reſpect to a politick body, and the whole complex Hierarchy, of which number he is made up, as the conſtituent parts, we muſt alſo underſtand, by this computation, the *Antichriſt*, with reſpect to a long continued ſeries, and ſucceſſion, which here the Scripture ſhews to the Church, that he is not a ſingle individual perſon only, or ſuch a politick body of many numerous degrees, reſolving in one head, which ſhould be but for an age; or of a ſhort duration; but that he is an adverſary who is to be continued in a numerous ſucceſſion through a ſeries of many ages; and thus may the man of ſin and his name be underſtood, by this number of which he is made up; now in this, I humbly judg, the ſcope of the Scripture is clear, in ſetting down ſuch a rule to count Antichriſt by his number, & thus does Prophetically obviat that great miſtake after ages would fall in, and is to this day entertained, that this adverſary is but one individual perſon, who ſhould get up, and cauſe a remarkable Apoſtacy in the Church; therefore it is that the World will not know this is he, when they ſee him before their eyes, not conſidering that ſuch a numerous body, and ſucceſſion is contained in his name, from which he cannot be ſeparat.

But for further clearing, I ſhall offer ſome few things to be ſeriouſly conſidered in his reckoning; *Firſt*, Here is a number, and plurality, by the Holy Ghoſt particularly ſet down, by which Antichriſt muſt be known and counted, and the tye is ſo cloſs be-

betwixt him and his number, that both the man, and his name is formally made up thereof. 2. Here is a number, which is not to be ſought after by the ſubtile computations of Arithmetick, or any curious inquiry in the numeral letters of a mans name; ſince thus we cannot know the true uſe of Chriſtian wiſdome, and prudence which the Scripture requires; yea it is clear this way might anſwer ſeveral other names as well as Lateinos, which could not in an ordinary way be determined, without a pretending to ſome extraordinary revelation, and diſcovery; but here may be judged work for ſpiritual wiſdome, to count this number of Antichriſt, and his name, with reſpect to his nature, frame, and compoſition. 3. Here is ſuch a number which is all ſummed up in one man, and cannot otherwayes be counted or underſtood, but as it hath a reſpect to a ſingle perſon, in a continued ſucceſſion wherein it reſolves; now is there not ſuch a number to which the Pope ſtands as nearly related, as the total ſumme is to theſe degrees, and leſſer numbers of which it is made up? And here is wiſdome, to joyn aright that man of ſin, and his number, and there ſee how exactly they quadrat in the event, and each gives light to an other. 4. We finde here a large number, wherein there is a plurality of many different degrees, riſing above other, and is therefore definitly expreſſed by ſo great a number as 666. 5. This is alſo a number (and herein there ſeems clear ground for ſuch a remark) which is moſt unit and compact, with a cloſs concatenation, a remarkable order and riſing from a lower to a higher degree, with a ſpecial ſubordination & dependance on other, yea is thus knit, that one part comprehends the other; ſuch as is moſt clear and obvious, in that ſubtile politick conſtitution of the Romiſh

mish State, & that numerous Hierarchy, with which this definite number of 666 seems marvellously to quadrat, whereas by a scale of so many steps, and degrees, you may follow up this number, as it were from six to sixty, &c. by Deans, Provincials, Generals of Orders, to Bishops, thence Archbishops, Primats, Patriarchs, Cardinals, until you finde all resolve in one man; who is as straitly related to it as a name can be to so many syllabes whereof it is made up. I know this may seem too curious an inquiry, and not so suiting the gravity and weight of the Scripture, but since the Spirit of God hath choised such a definite number by an other, wherein there is so strange an order and quadration, to discover that adversary, and gives us such ground that his number points at his frame and composition, I think without any challenge of unsobriety such a remark very sutable. 6. Whilst the Scripture shews, this is the number of a man, and of his name, does it not also shew it is such a number that lies neareſt Antichrist, & is most straitly related to him, and as the formale cause does most specially concurre in his constitution, yea gives as it were life to that image; now let it be seriously considered what this is, yea whither that mystery of Antichristianism does not in a peculiar way ly in his Supremacy, and being infallible and the ultimat judge of controversies, which he claimes as absolute Head of the Church universal, & that fountain whence all these degrees of power in the Romish Hierarchy do flow, and in whom they fully terminat; for it is clear thence are all these gross tenets, and corruption in doctrine; thus he most directly exalts himself against God, and puts the Mediator off his throne; thus he does exerce authority over mens conscience; thus Antichristianism, and that avowed op-

oppoſition to Jeſus Chriſt takes lite, is nourished & hath its ſtrength, even under theſe wings of his abſolute ſupremacy; now if it be clear, this is the number which lyes neareſt to Antichriſt, from which he can no wayes be ſeparated, and does moſt formally make up that man of ſin, then by the exerciſe of Chriſtian wiſdome may that number, and its true meaning be thence underſtood. 7. Is not this ſuch a number that is peculiarly reſtricted, in a claſſe by it ſelf, which the 18 Verſe does shew, wherein that great Bulk of the Romish Church is not to be ſought; for though it is there clear, that ſuch who receive the mark, and by ſome viſible profeſſion own the doctrine of the Romish Church, are of the largeſt extent, and therefore it is ſaid, great and ſmall, rich and poore, muſt come that length, yet as to the number of the beaſt, and of his name, it is expreſſed by its ſelf, and as a higher claſſe in which all of the common rank who muſt receive the mark does not fall; but as lying more cloſſe and near to Antichriſt, is in a peculiar manner reſtricted by a diſtinguishing note; which a ſerious ſtudy of that Scripture will help to clear. (¶)

XI. What was prophecied anent *the killing of the witneſſes under Antichriſt*, *Rev.* 11: *v.* 3, 7, 8. we may ſay hath clearly come to paſſe, and at this day may read the ſame in the event, for it is manifeſt.

1. That dureing Antichriſts reigne even in the darkeſt times, there wanted not ſome to ſeal the truth, and bear witnes thereto, both by open confeſſion, and ſuffering on that account, which the Church Hiſtories can aboundantly make out.

2. That dureing that dark night theſe who did give a teſtimony, and any way appeared againſt the grievous encroachments of Antichriſts in behalf of down-

down-born truth, were put to prophecy in ſackcloth, when there was nothing left, but to weep over the Churches ruines, and witnes their deteſtation, and grief for the growing Apoſtacy of ſuch times.

3. It is clear, that as the prophecy doth point at ſome more remarkable ſuffering, & perſecution, which the Church was to meet with from Antichriſt, beyond all it had endured from that adverſary in former ages, yea, a ſpecial permiſſion from the Lord to that party, to vent their rage and cruelty againſt the Saints, which should fall out after the witneſſes finishing their teſtimony, who had ſo long in an abject low condition, as in ſackcloth prophecied, yea, when Antichriſt should be at his height, and his Kingdome upon the turn, that then muſt this remarkable killing of the witneſſes be accomplished; ſo, likewiſe did the event convincingly verify the ſame, for it is known that upon the cloſe of Antichriſts reigne, whilest the truth began to break up this foreſt ſtorme of perſecution beyond all that had been before, did then break upon the Church, even in its budding forth, that we may ſay, that adverſary did not onely put forth the outmoſt of his power and rage againſt the Saints, but ſeemed in ſome meaſure to bring his cruel deſignes to paſſe, which the dreadful maſſacres in in France, Province, and the Valleys of Piemont, the ſore and violent perſecution of the Church through the Nederlands, under the Duke of Alva, and in Engeland by Queen Mary, in Germany after the defeat of the Duke of Saxony, and Landgrave of Heſſe can clearly witnes.

4. Is it not alſo clear, how this remarkable ſtorm, and cutting down of the Saints, over whoſe dead bodies their adverſaries did rejoice, was according to this prophecy to be previous to ſome eminent enlargements,

gement, and reviving of the Church, which did accordingly fall out in the event like a resurrection of the witnesses from the dead, to the astonishment of the World, that immediatly followed upon the back thereof, so that when their enemies thought they had gained their end, as they did conclude by such persecutions, particularly that French massacre that the Protestant interest should be quite ruined, they were forced to see their labour in vain, and the Church more eminently flowrishing after the same.

I shall further adde, that Antichrist hath not onely been revealed, and his Kingdome come to its height, but it is clear this day that it is on the falling hand, and his ruine is now begun, upon which account we may say, yea, have cause to sing that the winter is past the fig tree putteth forth her leaves, that sheweth the sommers approach, yea, the singing of birdes is heard in our land, let us go forth, and meet him who is now gone out as a mighty man, for the salvation of his Church, and takes the fields against this great adversary of his truth and people, on whose side victory doth surely wait.

II. What is yet to be Accomplished.

HAving touched a little some of the most concerning prophecies of the Scipture, both under the New and Old Testament, which are already fulfilled and the truth thereof so clearly written forth in the history of providence, that we may say the most ordinary observers, if they will not shut their eyes, cannot want a conviction thereof, I shall now in

in the next place point at that which yet remaineth of the prophetical part of the Scripture, to be accomplished; theſe prophecies which concern the Church in theſe laſt times, whereby we may have aſure demonſtration, how far the night is ſpent, and of the near approach of that bleſſed day of the liberty of the ſonnes of God, for this doth finish the myſtery of God, and fully prefecteth his work, if once that which remaineth of the prophecies of the word were fulfilled.

There are theſe truths the accomplishment whereof we have a ſure warrant to expect before the end; Frſt, the full ruin, and downfal of Babylon. 2. The converſion, and incalling of the Jewes to Jeſus Chriſt. 3. A ſolemn day of the Churches flowriſhing, both Iewes, and Gentiles, which ſhall follow the outmaking of the former promiſe. 4. The fall, and deſtruction of the Turkish Empire, that cruel party who have been raiſed up, and eſtabliſhed for judgment, with whom the Lord ſhall yet reckon, for all that Chriſtian blood by them, ſo unjuſtly ſhed, ſeemeth clearly held forth, *Rev. 16: ver.* 12. 5. We are alſo to expect after all theſe, that full, & laſt ſtroke upon Gog, and Magog, and then the Lord is at hand, and that great myſtery of the prophecies, and promiſes of the Scripture, ſhall then be finiſhed, and at a bleſſed cloſe.

I. We have have *the full ruin and deſtruction of antichriſt, and his Kingdome* clearly prophecied, and in very expreſſe tearmes promiſed to the Church, 2 *Theſſ.* 2: *ver.* 2. 8. *Rev. 16: ver.* 10, *and* 17. the accomplishment whereof we do yet according to the Scripture wait for, that the God of truth who cannot lye or repent, ſhall in due time aſſuredly bring about

about, and that appoacheth when that ſolemn cry ſhall be heard, *Babylon is fallen*, anent which we would conſider.

1. That this judgement is already begun and the firſt ſtep thereof viſible is now clear, wherein men may ſee the event moſt exactly anſwer the prophecy, for the Lord hath begun to conſume Antichriſt by the breath of his mouth, and ſince the firſt breaking up of the light, his Kingdome hath been mouldering down before the Word, have not Nations fallen off at the voice of the preached Goſpel? It is true the Church wanteth not ſore conflicts, even under the *Vials*, and it is the Lords way to try his People with ſuch various uncertainties, that when things have been moſt promiſing, another providence cometh like a croſſe wave, which ſeemeth to drive them as far back as once they ſeemed to be forward, yet, it is ſure, and ſhould be beyond debate, that Antichriſts overthrow is upon a preſent advance, and that work of the Lord for his Churches deliverance is going forward, for if we believe ſalvation by Chriſt upon the warrant of the word, ſhould we not alſo with much aſſurance believe that Antichriſts wound is deadly, and incurable, which he hath got by the preaching of the Goſpel, which all the Phyſitians of the earth ſhall never help.

2. This is one of the greateſt, and ſignal acts of the judgment of God on his Churches enemies, one of the moſt eminent manifeſtations of his glory which he hath reſerved for the laſt times, wherein, the appearance of his hand & great power ſhall be very manifeſt, & we are to expect by this remarkable ſtroke that way ſhall be made for that glorious houſe, which Chriſt is to have for himſelf in the latter dayes, which ſhall be built upon Antichriſts ruines, when that

new bride both of Iewes, and Gentiles, shall be prepared for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

3. Though we are to expect on clear ground from the word, the Lords eminent appearing by his immediat hand in this great work which shall be so convincing in that day, and witnes an extraordinary providence, that all onlookers must with fear and astonishment confesse that this is Gods own work, yet, it is also clear, that he will therein make use of instruments fitted, and chosen for that end, who shall be raised, and acted forth with a more then ordinary Spirit, to execute the vengeance of the Lord, even the judgement written, amongst whom the feeble shall then be strong, yea, we have ground to expect, that of the Kings of the earth, and the race and successours of these, who in former times had given their power to the Beast, shall the Lord raise up to hate the whore, and make her desolate; O blessed are they who shall have a hand in so noble a work to sack, and destroy that accursed City, built up with the blood of the Saints, and martyres of Jesus Christ.

4. We are not to bound the Lord, as to any particular time for accomplishing this piece of his word, yet, we have clear ground to believe that Babylons ruin maketh haste, and the day of the Lord upon her is near, whose sword is bathed in Heaven, and that the instruments of his vengeance are making ready, one stroke upon that party is already past, Antichrist hath begun to fall before the word, and must fall further until that great stroke, which shall destroy his seat, and lay waste that land, be accomplished; some promising evidences of its near approach I would here point at. 1. The many prayers of the saints, which are now before the throne, and cannot want a return, many who wrestled oft with the Lord on this

this accompt, though they are away, yet, are their prayers to the fore, and waits for this ſolemn manifeſtation of the judgement of God, and the blood of the Saints doth not ceaſe to cry, yea, hath as loud a cry as ever. 2. It is clear that the preached Goſpel now ſince the light began to break forth doth ripen, and help to make the harveſt more white then many ages formerly, and truely if we conſider how long the word hath been ſounding a retreat to that party, to come out of Babylon, and that for theſe 150 years they have been ſtill acting in oppoſition to ſo clear a light, to ſuch a ſolemn call, ſo many warnings, yea, to ſuch convincing diſcovery of the Lords being againſt them in very remarkable providences, doth it not ſhew, at what an height their ſin this day is, and an obſtinat rejecting of cure? 3. We cannot but ſee, how that judgement which ſhould be poured forth on Antichriſt under the vials, is in a great meaſure now verified in the event. 4. It is clear, and conſonant to the Scripture, that the Lords work is now haſtening in the latter dayes, providence in a ſwift motion and maketh great advance, more quick changes in the caſe of the Church both as to ſtormes, and calmes, and her trials now muſt not be ſo ſo long as in former time. *Rom* 9: *ver.* 28. he will cut ſhort his work in righteouſnes, for a ſhort work will the Lord make in the earth. 5. That Antichriſt and his followers, do this day ſeem to be at ſuch an advantage, the Lords work, as it were at a ſtand, yea, rather going back, this late reviving of Antichriſtian Prelacy in Brittain, and Ireland, with ſo viſible a growth of Popery there, and ſo dark an houre upon the reformed Churches abroad, I think, on very ſolid grounds is a promiſing evidence, of the near approach of a further ſtroke on that party; for it is clear both from the word,

and Gods ordinary way of procedure how a sharp storm is usually previous to some remarkable enlargement of the Church, a very low ebb, before the turning of the tide, yea, that every step of her advance, whereby she hath gained ground on Antichrist, hath still had some conflict, and wrestling going before, and thus the Lord by suffering doth ripen his People for such times of mercy; for which time, O let us pray, and wait, when the smoke of that accursed City shall ascend up to Heaven, and his People be made to triumph in his praise, and sing that song, *Halelujah, salvation, glory, and honour to the Lord God, who hath judged the great whore, rejoyce over her thou Heaven, and ye holy Apostles, and Prophets, for God hath avenged you upon her.*

II. We have a clear prophecy anent, *the incalling of the Iewes*, and their conversion to Christ in the latter dayes, held forth by the prophets, and in the New Testament very expressly mentioned, for the fulfilling whereof the Church must yet wait, and long after, when God shall bring again the captivity of his auncient People, and say to that valley of dry bones *live*, anent which we would consider, *Isai.* 11: *ver.* 15. *Rom.* 11: *ver* 24. *Rev.* 16: *ver.* 12.

1. That this promise doth not onely concern particular persons, or a few, but the body, and generality of that people, is most clear from the Scripture, if men would compare *Isa.* 11: *ver,* 11. *Zach.* 12: *ver.* 10. with *Rom.* 11: *ver.* 25. where it is undenyable that their gathering must be as full, and remarkable as their scattering; and as there is no nation so remote whither some of them are not this day, that shal not hinder the fulfilling of the promise, but as Esai sheweth, the Lord shall then assemble the dispersed

sed and outcasts, and bring them back from the foure corners of the earth, and furtheſt places thereof, yea, doth not the Apoſtle expreſly shew that it is all Iſrael, whereat this promiſe pointeth, for though they are enemies concerning the Goſpel, yet are they beloved for the fathers ſakes, becauſe of the Covenant which was made with Abraham, and his ſeed, and truely we have in this, ground alſo to expect ſomething further then their converſion, that in this day, the Lord ſhall raiſe the tabernacle of David which is fallen, and plant them upon their own land, *Amos.* 9: *ver.* 11, 15. not only bring them to a viſible Church ſtate, but even therewith ſome temporal reſtitution, and recollection of them as a Nation, yea, may expect a return of the old bleſſing of that lands fruitfulnes which *I* think is clearly held forth in that of *Amos* 9: *ver.* 14. that the very hils drop down ſweet wine and melt as it were in outward bleſſings on them.

2. That this promiſe hath not yet had an accomplishment, is alſo clear from the Word, for it muſt follow the rejection of that People, and should not take place until the fulnes of the gentiles be brought in; which harveſt for many ages after was not to be reaped, yea, did not the Apoſtle hold this forth as a myſtery, a piece of the Scripture, which the auncient Jewish Church could not well comprehend, when it was pointed at by the Prophets, and even at that time was not underſtood, which ſurely could have been no myſtery if their converſion had reached no further then the Apoſtles time; and it is known, how ſmall a number ſince of that People hath yet been brought in to Chriſt.

3. We have much ground from the Scripture,

that this day; this great day of Iezreel shall be a very remarkable and solemn time, which will cause astonishment to the Nations about, and make a wonderful change on the face of the earth, a time of Gods eminent appearance for that People, when his singular respect shall be as manifest as formerly his great displeasure and anger was, a time on which many of the choisest mercies of the Church do certainly wait, the return of many prayers, a large pouring forth of the Spirit, even on the body of that Peope and all ranks, not only the families of David, Nathan, and Levi, but also the families of Shimei, with a large outletting of gifts, yea, such a time, wherein the converted of Israel shall then see and understand, how far the glory of the second Temple doth exceed that of the first, and shall be a very conspicuous part of Christs universal Kingdome, eminent for the power, and purity of the ordinances, to which others shall look as to a most choise and excellent patern of a purely reformed, and glorious Church.

4. Besids the promise of him who is not like man, to lie, or the son of man to repent, there wants not some very convincing providences to confirm our faith anent this, if we consider how this People are still kept by themselves, amidst all their scatterings not mixt or incorporat with other Nations, which is most usuall through long converse that people of severalparts of the earth will unite and joyn in one, is not their great increase also remarkable? What great multitudes of them are in the eastern parts, yea, through most of Asia, Africk, & in these places of Europe where the Christian Church is, & all this time their land not possessed but by a rabble of the Turks under whose yoke they groan. and though the genealogies of particular families are at this day much lost, yet there is still

so

so much sure, and evident, as to the series, and genealogy of the Nation that doth difference them from any other People.

5. It is true the authority of the word should silence all our thoughts, how so great a thing shall be brought about, yet, we may judge, that as a mean this shall eminently contribute to the same, such a convincing stroke upon Antichrist which must go before their conversion, wherein so manifest an appearance of God, and the fulfilling of one of the greatest promises of the New Testament, cannot but stare them in the face, and with this the taking away of that stumbling block of idolatry which hath so long helpt to harden them against the profession of the Gospel.

I must shut up this with a sad regrate that whilest we have so clear a promise, there is no more tender respect, and further essay to promot the good of that People, who knoweth what a blessing might attend the use of ordinary meanes? since this is an unquestionable duty, and men know not when they sow the seed, whither this, or that shall prosper, alace that the usual deportment of Christians with whom they converse, doth oft further help to highten their prejudice against Christianity, let us long, and pray more for this day, a day which shall bring so great a blessing with it to the gentiles.

III. There are many prophecyes both in the Old and New Testament which do clearly point at *a great flowrishing and prosperity in the dayes of the Gospel* which I humbly conceive are not yet fully made out, but shall have a more remarkable accomplishment before the close of time, *Isai* 65: *ver.* 25, *Isai*. 66: *ver.* 12. *Mich.* 4: *ver.* 1. 2.

I confeſſe the event will be the ſureſt commentary, and until this appear men should be ſober, and cautious, that they darken not the counſel of God, and his truth, with any wilde fancy, and aim to be wiſe above that which is written, yet, I muſt think that there are great things laid up in theſe promiſes for the Church, that we cannot now well reach, yea, would ſcarce get believed until the appointed time unvail their meaning, I shall here but onely touch how it may appear theſe promiſes are not yet fully accomplished, and what with a ſafe warrant we may expect in their accomplishment, as to the firſt we would conſider theſe things.

1. That theſe great promiſes which hold forth ſo eminent an enlargement, and flowrishing of the Church, do alſo point at ſome particular limited time, ſome period, and revolution of the Churches condition, which is not agreable and common to other times, until which theſe promiſes do not take place.

2. This promiſed flowrishing concerneth both Jewes, and Gentiles, and the word doth clearly point at ſome further encreaſe of the gentil Church by the calling of the Jewes, which muſt have a peculiar reſpect to that ſolemn time of Iſraels reſtauration, and Antichriſts ruin, a time on which the return of many prayers, and the fulfilling of many promiſes in the behalfe of the Church doth ſurely wait; ſo that as Eſay, and other of the Prophets do put over this great flowrishing of the Church to the dayes of the Goſpel, the Apoſtle *Rom.* 11. doth point at a more preciſe time, wherein this in a larger meaſure shall be made out.

3. We cannot find the Chriſtian Church did ever enjoy ſo great an enlargement, and flowrishing ſtate as

as theſe promiſes ſeem to import, for perſecution and ſuffering hath moſt been her lot, firſt from the Jewes, next from her heathen adverſaries, and laſt from Antichriſt, whoſe fall, and ruin we have ground to expect ſhall make room for ſo great an increaſe of the Church, for how much power Antichriſt hath, in ſo far is the Church keept under, yea, it is clear how very ſhort all her breathings have been.

4. It would appear ſo ſolemn a time of the Churches flovvrishing whereat the Prophets did ſo oft point, as it hath an undoubted reſpect to the dayes of the Goſpel, ſo in its full accomplishment muſt anſvver to that remarkable day of Satans binding, and the Saints Reigne vvith Chriſt, vvhen the Kingdoms of the Earth become the Lords, vvhich vve find doth immediatly preceed Satans laſt looſing, and his going forth to gather his broken forces, for that great battel which is to be very near the end.

I ſhall but adde, vve have ground to judge the Lord vvill uſher in that glorious everlaſting ſtate of the Church, even by ſome preparative degrees here, the latter times are therefore to be reckoned the more bleſſed, the more near they approach to the dawning of glory.

Novv in the ſecond place I ſhall but point at ſome things which vvith a ſafe vvarrant, vve may underſtand, and look after, in the accomplishment of theſe promiſes.

It is very clear they hold forth a great enlargement to the univerſal Church both of Jewes, and Gentiles, particular Churches may be in a ſad withering condition vvhileſt other parts do flovvrish, but theſe promiſes ſeem to point at a day, vvhich vvill concern the ſaints in all corners of the earth, who ſhall not want

their

their share vvith the reſt of that bleſſed time, it may be alſo clear, ſome more bright, and hot ſun-shine of the Goſpel is held forth, ſome ſuch remarkable ſpring-tide of the Spirit that ſhall be as diſcernable, as the Churches lovv ebb ſometimes vvas, a day of the great power of God, his preſence very manifeſt among his people, and vvith the ordinances, beyond former times, ſo that *Ezek.* 48. *ver.* 35. the name of that place ſhall be called Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there, yea, that in this day Chriſts viſible Kingdome in a ſetled Church-ſtate ſhall more eminently flowrish, and the flowing in of people and nations with much fervour, vvho ſhall joyn themſelves to the Lord, pure ordinances, a more univerſal oneneſſe amongſt the vvorshippers of God, the vvalk of Chriſtians with a diſcernable luſtre of holines, made to commend the Goſpel, Chriſts goings full of Majeſty, and the shout of a King which then ſhall be heard among his People, the noyſe of ſuch ſad complaints, and bitter exerciſes from the ſpirit of bondage, not ſo much among the ſaints as in former times, and though vve ſee no ſure ground from the vvord to expect ſuch a favourable time wherein the Church militant ſhall not have trouble and perſecution from the World, yet, there ſeemeth ſo much clearly imported in ſome of theſe great promiſes, as point at a great calm, and more favourable gale of outward proſperity, which the Church ſhall then have, yea, this in ſome longer continuance then in former ages, a day wherein the haters of the Lord ſhall even be made to feign ſubjection, with much of the countenance, & concurrence of Magiſtrates, and the civil authority in behalfe of the Church; yea, a time of much holy fear amongſt the people of God, and of much terrour, and aw upon his enemies, to

which

which the great works of the Lord in that time shall then effectually contribute, and cause them fear the Lord, and his goodnesse in the latter dayes.

(¶) IV. There is a special prediction of Satans binding up and restraint, and of some remarkable reigne of the Church with Jesus Christ held forth, *Rev.* 20. 2. The full accomplishment of which we on clear ground may judge is not yet come, yet is so far now verified in the event as may clearly witness its meaning, and let us see how at this day it is taking place; I confess this seems one of the most dark and abstruse propheſies we have in the Scripture, on which there hath been many strange thoughts, and glosses held forth; but to set down these various judgements of men on the truths of God, I humbly think may tend to a further darkning of the same, more then to any solide edification, I shall only offer some things to be considered, which by undeniable consequence from the Scripture seem most clear and obvious, and may not only help to understanding this Propheſie, but that manifest correspondence which is betwixt it and the event at this day.

1. There can be no debate this solemne time of the Saints reigne with Christ concerns the militant condition of the Church, and must be expected here in the earth, not in heaven, and therefore we finde immediatly after, there is a very sore assault of the Devil held forth, who should occasion a new triall to the Church and be for a time let loose to deceive the nations. 2. Since the Scripture is the best interpreter of it self, we must here understand with comparing one place with another this raising of the Saints and Martyrs of Jesus Christ to reigne with him figuratively, and in such a sense as that in. *Rev.* 11. 11. must be

under-

understood, to wit a rising of the witnesses in the same spirit and power, and of such a party who should bear the same testimony, to which all that is *Mal.* 4. 5. and *Mat.* 11. 14. anent Johns coming in the same Spirit of Elijah with which he did appear to the World gives light; so that we see how consonant and agreable the Scripture is with it self. 3. Is not the meaning of the Spirit in this propheſy clear, that the greatest enlargment of the Church yea of the longest duration and continuance that it should have under the new Testament unto the second coming of Christ is held forth in the reigne of the saints, so that it manifestly points at a more solemne time a more sweet refreshing interval, which shall be remarkable both in measure and duration beyond all she formerly had, and shews that there is no such a happy time else to go over the Churches head till she be triumphant in heaven, therefore it is called κατ' ἐξοχὴν the Churches reigne, considered comparatively with any other such change. 4. Is it not very clear that this so remarkable time cannot be judged previous to Antichrists coming, nor under his advance and growth, since first this points expresly at these who were beheaded for the witness of Christ, and had not worshiped the beast and his image nor received his marke, who should thus be raised to reigne with Christ. 2. We finde that it doth very immediatly preceed that last assault the Church shall have upon Satans loosing to gather the nations to that great battel, and so must concerne these last times, when the Lord is pouring out his vials upon the throne and Kingdome of the beast; it is strange when the Scripture is so plain that some choyse and excellent men writing on this propheſy will have it contemporat with the Churches condition

condition before Antichrists appearance, for it is sure if by the beast and his image and mark Antichrist must be understood, and if there be but one great assault mentioned after this which the Church militant shall have before the close of time, this prophesie must now be fulfilling, and with no other time before this could quadrat according to the Scripture. 5. Is it not clear that this great restraint of Satan is no such absolute binding, that will put the Church wholly beyond trouble and reach of his assaults, no, this belongs to heaven, and is there only to be expected; but the Scripture very evidently shew's this shall be such a binding up of Satan, that he should not deceive the nations, nor have that wonted power to darken the face of the Church by any great or universal apostacy during this time; and I am sure it is undeniable, that since the Churches raising from under Antichrist, Satan hath been thus restrained, and by all his violent assaults, he hath not reached the full withdrawing of any one nation which was brought under the yoke of the Gospel, whatever may be said of poor Bohemia by a violent spate of persecuting so born downe, that this once famous Church is now scattered in other places, where there are yet considerable numbers, yea it is not altogether without hope, that the great avenger of blood will yet visite her cruel usage on that bloody Austrian family, and returne yet her captivitie again, when it seems now furthest off and hopeless. 6. Must we not see that this great sunshine as it takes in Antichrists fall hath a special respect also to Israels return and conversion, which according to the Scripture is one of the most solemne & flowrishing times that the Christian Church shall have, and therefore shall be to the gentiles as life from the dead; now do but seriously judge what the Churches con-

dition

dition hath been through all the times of the New Testament, first under heathens, and after under the tyranny of Antichrist, and now how far providence do's unfold the meaning of this prophesy in the event, since the man of sin began to decline, and I humbly judge, it may be easie, to see that at this day it is clearly taking place, though this solemne reigne be not yet advanced to its greatest pitch, but will have a more remarkable period ere this prophesy be fully made out. I shall but adde, this resurrection mentioned in the prophesy must be in a spiritual sense understood, and can be no bodily raising of the Saints, since it is so expressly there called the first resurrection to difference it from the second, and is held forth in an opposition to the first death. (¶)

VI. We have a prophecy held forth, *Rev.* 16: *ver.* 12. which comparing with *Rev.* 9: *ver.* 13. seemeth clearly to point at *the fall, and destruction of the Turkish Empire* who have been these many ages so great a scourge to the Christian World, for its manifest that this drying up of the river of Euphrates must relate to that very party which we finde in that 9 Chap, raised up from about that river, where the Turk hath so considrable a part of his dominions; it is true the event will more clearly make this known, yet these are undeniable.

1. That such a party was foretold by John in that 9 Chap. and a solemn warning given to the Church of so dreadfull a storm, the time also there pointed forth when Antichrist should be at a great height, yea, the portraicture of such an adversary most evidently held forth, such as indeed they were found to be, a terribe cruel destroying parry, and therefore are said to have breastplates of fire, their number also there held

held out to be a very great multitude, which theſe huge armies uſually brought by the Turk to the field can witnes.

2. The cauſe why the Lord ſhould raiſe up ſo dreadful an enemy, and thus let them looſe, is alſo expreſly declared in that 9 Cha. 20 ver. that it was in judgement, and for a plague on men for Antichriſtian idolatry, which then had ſo much overſpread the earth, and it was no wonder, that when ſo much of the viſible Church was turned almoſt brutish in their Religion, and from the pure worship of God was caried after idols of gold, and ſilver, the work of mens hands, that ſo brutish, and barbarous an adverſary ſhould be let out for a ſcourge; I truely think that as Antichriſt, and the abominations of that party hath been hitherto the let of ſucceſſe againſt the Turk; ſo we are not to expect the proſpering of any ſuch deſign, and his fall, and ruin, until the cauſe be removed; for which the Lord did make uſe of this dreadful rod.

3. That ſuch a party was raiſed up according to the prophecy, yea, at the appointed time thereof, is very clear, who like a mighty deluge did overflow a great piece of the earth, and with ſtrange prodigious ſucceſſe, did overrun much of Aſia, ſome parts of Africk, and brake in on Enrope to give work to theſe kings, & great men, and be a ſcourge to them who had given their power to uphold the throne of the Beaſt.

4. There is alſo clear ground from the Scripture that the Lord ſhall as eminently appear in the fall, and deſtruction of this adverſary as in the raiſing of them up, and that by their fall, he is to make way for the accomplishing of his promiſe, anent the Churches further encreaſe, his auncient people,

whereto this prophecy seems to have a particular respect: this we are to look after as one of the great works of the Lords that is reserved for the latter dayes which shall no lesse shew forth his power and glory, even the drying up of that great Euphrates, then in the day that he divided the sea, & made Iordan a dry channel for his people to go through; we are not to be further positive anent means, and instruments how such a thing shall be brought about, it is enough what the Lord hath spoken, and the word that is gone out of his mouth shall not return in vain.

VII. Now to close this, there is yet one great assault which we finde the Church shall have before the end, and then her warfare will be near finished, anent which the Scripture is clear, that Sathan for a little must be let loose, and that solemn and perfect victory; which the Church in the close of time will get over all adversaries, shall be ushered in with a very sharp trial, & once again this ungodly World will shew its rage, ralley its broken scattered forces, in a general muster Rev. 20:8. with as much fury as ever, and there shall the Lord eminently appear, that by one full stroke he may for ever decide that long continued war, and feed betwixt the Church, and her enemies, a deliverance which as it will be the last, so one of the greatest, that ever the Church had, the Lord thus finishing his work of providence by so stately, and magnificent a close; and truely after this we know no more of Canonick Scripture to be fulfilled but the coming of the Lord, when the poor, tost, afflicted Church, shall enter unto a triumphant estate above all the violence, & oppression of men. O blessed, & long looked for day of Christs return to judgement, when the

the duſt of the Saints that for ſome thouſand yeares paſt have been reſting in hope, ſhall awake, & this earth and all the glory thereof like a poor vain ſhew diſappear? O bleſſed, and comfortable time in which the ſaints ſhall then fully known what Heaven is, which they have ſo oft admired at a diſtance, to behold his face in whoſe preſence is fulnes of joy, and ſhall need no further confirmations of the truth of the word, when once this great promiſe of the Lords return is verifyed, a promiſe, wherein all theſe pretious truths which concerned the Church in her journey, as ſo many ſtreames, ſhall empty themſelves in this great deep, then there is no more to do, the work of the Goſpel is finished, the redeemed all brought in, and the Bride made ready to go forth and meet him, who ſhall fully ſatisfy, and comfort his People, according to the dayes of their former affliction, and be for ever their exceeding great reward.

THE FIFTH ARGUMENT.

THat which not only is for the moſt part already accompliſhed, but is a thing whereof we have ſo ſure confirmations, yea, ſo great a pledge in our hand from the Lord, that what yet remaineth ſhall be certainly fulfilled, muſt it not be an undoubted truth? But the Scripture as to theſe ſpecial predictions, that are not yet made out, is ſuch, anent which the Lord hath given his People a very large pledge, and ſtrong confirmations now in theſe latter times, to believe their certain accompliſhment, Therefore, &c.

It is ſure that a part of the Scripture, ſome ſpecial prophecies, which do concern the ſtate of the Church

in these last times, hath not yet had an accomplishment, which are already touched in the former argument, and are indeed so great concerning truths that may cause us sit down, and wonder, when we think these shall shortly come to passe; yet such, whereof we may be fully perswaded, if we consider that they are held forth, and promised by him who is the God of truth, and the begun performance hereof, now so manifest, yea what hath been the Lords way, and the eminent providences of these last times which may fully satisfy our spirits that Gods work is near to a close, and the accomplishing of the whole Scripture now at hand.

I shall here point at some special grounds whence the godly in these times may be throughly confirmed anent the truth, and certain outmaking of the Scripture, and these prophecies thereof, that yet are not fulfilled, which we should look on, as a very convincing pledge in our hand of the same.

(¶) First is not *the being of the world, yea the heaven and the earth which we see*, with the continued course of nature given from the Lord, and held forth to his people, as a witness to his truth, and a sure pledge to comfirme their faith anent its accomplishment? That when we look upon the heavens or the earth we may there read a visible seal of the certain performance of the whole Scripture of God, which for that very end are set before our eyes; we have this clear *Jer.33: ver.* 20. that the Covenant with the day and the night is there given to the Church to confirme that Covenant betwixt the Lord and his people, this also is held forth *Jer.31.ver.* 35. *Thus sayth the Lord who gives the sun a light by day, and the moon and starr by night, if these ordinances shall depart, then may the seed*

ſeed of Iſrael ceaſe and fail from being a nation, It is alſo clear *Pſ.* 89: *ver.* 2. *That the faithfulnes of God is eſtabliſhed in the very heavens*, and theſe given as a ſpecial convincing pledge to confirme the faith of his people in the matter of his truth, and of the performance of his word, for which we will find in the 37 ver of that Pſalme the ſun and the moon given to the Church as a witneſs: is not the rainbow alſo *Gen:* 9, (though not natural, but an inſtituted ſigne, becauſe there is no correſpondence betwixt the ſigne and the thing ſignified) given as a viſible ſigne of the Covenant of God to ſeal unto men the aſſurance of his word and promiſe?

I muſt think it ſtrange that we do not conſider this world and look on the frame thereof with more aſtonishment, yea, that it is not a greater and more marvellous thing in our eyes if we would but think ſeriouſly, Whence it is and how it came to have a being; let us ſuppoſe one were brought forth into the light, from a dark place where he had never ſeen it before, and there let his eyes wander a litle upon the heavens and the earth, O what a dazling and amazing ſight would that be! But it muſt be ſaid we look on theſe every day, yet know not how to read or underſtand, what is written thereon; oh this great univerſe is for the moſt part as a ſealed book.

But for clearing of this truth there are two things we would gravely conſider. 1. Something which muſt be previouſly known, and beleeved, that thoſe viſible heavens and earth are the very work and product of this God, whoſe word and promiſe we have in the Scripture, and have their being and original from him; for otherwiſe there could be no reaſoning from theſe anent the truth of his word. 2. We would alſo conſider, what a convincing pledge is

here, for confirming our faith of the Scripture, and of the ſure performance of all that is yet remaining thereof to be accomphished.

As to the firſt, it might ſeem unneceſſary ſo much as once to mention it, ſince it is ſo little queſtioned, or under debate; but oh it is too clear, that many truths are eaſily admitted, which are not really believed: I know the world would finde it hard to ſhift ſo manifeſt a demonſtration, that this univerſe is the work and product of the great God, when there is in it ſo bright a diſcovery of infinite power and wiſdome, truly it is ſtrange how men could admit its being who have denyed its beginning, which not only by faith we underſtand, but is moſt evident from ſolide grounds of reaſon; and though men are undone with implicite faith and a common aſſent to the greateſt fundamental truths without any ſolide perſwaſion thereof, yet the greateſt Atheiſts cannot keep off the diſcovery of this, but by keeping at a diſtance from it; which truly Ariſtotle and others of theſe ancients, did not ſo much deny the ſame, but not knowing the Scripture they could not know how it should be: thence Epicurus and others of his followers finding that they could not ſalve the *Phænomena* of nature and ſhun unanſwerable abſurdites if they admitted an eternity of the world, did fall on ſuch an irrational fancy, to avoide this, of the fortuitous concurſe of atoms, yea ſome held an eternal praxiſtence of the firſt matter, which pitiful notions may ſhew what ſad caſe men are in, who groap after the truth by the twilight of nature, and are ſtrangers to the Scripture: bu I leave this, and ſhall only touch a little ſome moſt clear and ſatisfying evidences of this truth that the beginning and original of the world is not more clear from the Scripture, then it

is

is alſo demonſtrable from ſolide convincing grounds of reaſon; and truly a clear diſcovery of this hath a further reach then may be apprehended, to give the Athiſme of men a dead ſtroke, and shake all its grounds: now let theſe few things be ſeriouſly conſidered. 1. If you confeſs there is a Deity, that God bleſſed for ever is, muſt you not neceſſarily admit a creation and beginning, ſince eternity is a thing that is only communicable to the firſt cauſe, and you cannot conceive that the earth could produce it ſelf, for to exiſt and not to exiſt at the ſame time is a contradiction; and I am ſure they muſt ſhut their eyes who do not every where diſcern ſome witneſs of the glorious being of God. 2. You cannot deny that there is ſuch a thing as time, ſince there is no judging of days, years and ages to be infinite, or how one thing in a continued order ſhould go before another without coming to ſome firſt & beginning. 3. Do's not this gradual advance of humane knowledge in the earth, and that further diſcovery which arts and ſciences have made by a continued improvment of the ſame witneſs very clearly a beginning and original of the world, for ye could not conceive a perpetual ſucceſſion of mankinde with a conſtant eſſay after further knowledge, with ſuch a continued progreſs in experience, as an eternity ſuppoſed before this would produce, and yet the moſt concerning arts and ſciences, yea, the choiſeſt experiments and inventions we have in the world to be of ſo late a riſe and date, ſuch as the uſe of printing, and of the Mariners compaſs by the load ſtone, the uſe of guns, the improvement of mineralls in Medicine; yea the very motion and convoy of the blood in mans body which are but of late diſcovery. 4. May not ſo short a hiſtory which to this day we have of the world,

witnes its late Original, and that it is of no eternal duration, since the ancienteſt records of time, or of things paſt do not exceed ſome thouſands of years; and could this be poſſibly conceived, that infinite ages preceeding, if ſuch had been, ſhould give no account nor leave a remembrance to poſterity, when theſe late ages holds ſo much forth; yea, how could it be that it is but of late one part of the world is known and diſcovered to another part thereof? 5. It is very manifeſt from the known records we have of bypaſt times, what hath been the riſe and encreaſe of nations, yea, how a great part of men have from a rude and ſavage eſtate been brought into Society, and under laws and government, which ſhews this world muſt be of a ſhort duration, which none could conceive by admitting ſuch a ſuppoſal of its eternal being. 6. It is ſure man is born and dies, and in that ordinary way of generation mankinde is ſtill propagat; and is not here the worlds beginning very obvious? For you cannot judge that men ſhould beget other eternally without going back at laſt to ſome firſt man, who could not beget himſelf. 7. If eternity be preferable to time, can you judge the excelleneſt things of the earth, ſuch as man, and nixt unto him the beaſts, are periſhing, and only theſe things which are inanimat and the maſs of the earth whereon they tread is of a perpetual duration. 8. It is manifeſt what an increaſe a few men (not to ſpeak of other living creatures) may in an ordinary way have, to people a vaſt countrey even in ſome ages, now is it not thus clear the world can be of no eternal duration, for if you ſhould this way, turn back on an infinite number of ages, and ſuppoſe that every age ſhould but adde and multiply to the race of man two or three, it would come at laſt to this, the earth

could

could not bear them; since we must thus suppose some infinite encrease from an infinite continuance of the world, which no wars or consuming stroks could in such a measure diminish. 9. Can you conceive that should be eternal which is wholly made up of corruptible and perishing things; since the things of the world have all their set times, and seasons wherein they appear, and are quickly gone: in a word must not these deny a dissolution of this world or an after judgment and life to come, yea the whole truth of religion, if this great truth be not received and beleeved.

But having premitted some few evidences that may witness the original of the world, yea that this marvellous frame with the whole continued course of nature is the product of a divine power and wisdome, I shall here in the second place point at some few things, which may shew how great a pledge this is, and what a quieting ground it should be to the faith of the godly, that the Scripture is certainly true, and must have an accomplishment, since from the very being and beginning of the world, we may clearly reason to these which by undeniable consequence followes.

1. That the world now is, is a sure and confirming witness to its last close, and of the accomplishment of that promise of its dissolution in the end of time, we know it is not long since there was no earth, no sun, moon or stars, now upon no less security then that word, by which it was formed we must believe it shall ere long cease to be, what now it is, and thus when we look upon the world, and see such a thing before us, ought we not to read that promise of its after dissolution clearly written thereon before our eyes? 2. It is a very clear consequence,

that this God can bring his word unto performance, and his power therein cannot fail or fall short, yea that his counsel and purpose hath no dependence on means or instruments who did once bring this world out of nothing, and said let there be heaven and an earth when there was none: O when we open the bible and read the great promises thereof, should we not have that impression on our souls, these are the true and faithful sayings of God, and his word with whom the doing thereof is as easie as to say it; who without the concurrence of instruments, or any coworkers could bring this great creation forth; we truly so far mistake the meaning of the heavens, and these great celestial bodies, with the marvellous order that is there, when we cannot read the truth and faithfulness of God in all his promises write thereupon, for they are held forth to men as a confirming pledge of the same, and this were indeed an excellent study and improvment of Astrology. 3. Since it is sure and undeniable that this earth doth hang in the emptie place, though men see not whereon it leans and rests; O what a strange thing is it! Could the air bear up so vast and ponderous a body, but herein is a marvellous divine power convincingly witnessed, which hath so established it that it cannot be moved; Now is not this his very word that bears up such a weight, and thence with as clear ground we may reason, for adventuring of the Church with its weight, and every Christians burden, whatever it may be, on the promise of this God, on whose word the great bulk of the earth doth this day lean: I must say no mathematical demonstration do's follow, by a clearer evidence, then this consequence from such premisses is undenyable. 4. We see the Lord keeps covenant with the day and the night,

yea

yea that ſummer and winter do's not fail before him according to his promiſe, and are not theſe a viſible witneſs for God that his truth & Covenant with his Church ſhall not faile, for it is ſure the continued courſe of nature hath ſuch an audible voice if we could but liſten thereto. 5. Do's not the Lord clearly witneſs by ſuch a ſtrange contrariety that is amongſt the elements, and theſe different qualities whereof he ſerves himſelf in this great frame, and compoſure of the world, that this promiſe ſhall not fail, but it is eaſie for him to verify the ſame, in making all things work together, were they never ſo croſs and diſagreeing among themſelves, for an accomplishment of his deſigne, 6. When we ſee the rage and violence of the great Ocean bounded by a bank of ſand, for which there could be no true reaſon given, how ſuch an impetuous and furious motion could be reſtrain'd, and the ſand be a bridle to the ſea, if it were not to make out the faithfulneſs of God, who by a perpetual decree hath thus bounded it; O is there not thence a viſible confirmation of his truth! that he can alſo reſtrain the rage of men, and turn it unto his praiſe, and for attaining this end ſerve himſelf of moſt imptobable midſes; it was a notable ſaying of a grave Miniſter of Chriſt, when he was upon the ſea in a ſtorme, O ſhall I fear, ſays he, the face of a tyrrant, that ſerve him who can reſtrain and tame the rage of this ſwelling ſea. 7, If we conſider the earth and its original, and look aright on that ſo oft repeated diſcovery we have of the ſeed time and harveſt, & of the earth bringing forth ſuch innumerable kindes of vegetables in the ſpring after a dead winter, as out of their graves, may we not thence have a very clear confirming ſeal of that great truth of the reſurrection, and of the raiſing of the duſt of men

mens bodies that is buried under the earth; I shall but say, does not God thus give a continued wonder, and set the same before our eyes in the continued course of nature, to assure us of his truth and promise, that it shall not fail though there were no appearance how in an ordinary way it could be accomplished. (¶)

II. Ground whence we may be thus confirmed in our faith is this; that not onely the most part of the Scripture is already proved, and verified in the event, but also, *These truths which of the whole Scripture are most strange, and marvellous, yea, should have much staggered our faith if they were yet still in a promise are this day certainly accomplished*, I shall but only instance *the coming of the Messias*, which the Prophets of old foretold, that God should be manifest in the flesh, and a virgin bring forth a son, whose name should be Emmanuel, that was to dye, and be cut off out of the land of the living, not for himself but for the transgression of his People, is not this now surely accomplished? Which we may say is the greatest wonder, the most astonishing thing that ever was, or shall be, and should fully silence our thoughts anent any other Scripture truth, that is yet to be made out, for we know that the great bussines of redemption is put to a close, the ransome and price thereof fully told down, now is the doctrine of the Gospel sealed, and attested by blood even the blood of the Testator, it is now sure the promised Messias hath come, and this is he, who in the dayes of Pilat suffered at Jerusalem, in whom all things which were written by the Prophets, were truly accomplished. And is not this a great pledge, to assure us of the real outmaking of every other promise? It is sure he did dye, his blessed

bleſſed ſide was pierced with a ſpear, and upon the croſſe he cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghoſt. O Here lyeth the greateſt cauſe of wonder, not what doth yet remain of the Scripture, but that which is already fulfilled, not that Chriſt ſhould come again to judge the World, but that once he did come to the World, and become man; for God to be found in the form of a ſervant & dye, that is beyond expreſſion wonderful, for the other muſt neceſſarly as a conſequent follow, that he who hath redeemed the Church, and did pay her ranſome ſhould ſee the travel of his ſoul, and be ſatisfied, that having made ſuch a purchaſe he ſhould alſo have poſſeſſion and finish the building, the foundation whereof was his own blood. I confeſſe what we do yet expect according to the promiſe, are great, and aſtonishing truths, the full overthrow of Antichriſt, and his Kingdome, that the dead bones of the Jewish Church ſhould again live, but ſpecially Chriſts return to judgement, who ſhall be revealed from heaven with flaming fire, the ſound of the trumpet, and voice of the Archangel, yet, how great ſoever they are and may ſeem hard for us to believe, O how ſmall comparatively are they, with that which is already done & accomplished, the Incarnation of the Son of God, a myſtery hid from ages, wherein the Angels with wonder doe look, which we may ſay, is unſpeakably more great, then to creat this World, and turn it again to nothing; it may be truely ſtrange, whileſt we read theſe prophecies anent Chriſt, and his Kingdome, in ſo plain an hiſtory, and profeſſe that we believe he did dye, and riſe again, we ſhould have ſuch heſitation, anent the performance of any other Scripture promiſe; is it not this day much more eaſy, to believe the Scripture and fulfilling thereof, then it was of old for the Jewish

wish Church before Christs comming? And now may we not with as much assurance wait for the second coming of the Lord, and a full perfecting of his word even from that which is already verified thereof, as we are sure of the return of the sun after it is gone down, and of the breaking of the day when once the night is past.

III. Ground whence the godly in these times should be confirmed anent the full performance of that which is yet remaining of the Scripture, that it is sure, yea now near at hand, is this, that *Jesus Christ is come to action against the enemies of his Church, and hath taken the fields, that surely he is now gone forth in the greatnes of his strength conquering, and to conquer.*

This is a grave truth which might give us very sweet refreshing thoughts in so shaking a time, that whilest we have seen the Lords appearing by a great, and outstretched hand for his people, these terrible stirs, and concussions of the nations, have seen him strike through Kings in the day of his wrath, and fill the places with the dead bodies of his adversaries, we may also on clear Scripture grounds conclude, that the Lord is now awaked as a mighty man, and upon the fields, yea, that the war is surely begun against Antichrist, and all the adversaries of his Church, which shall not cease until the full victory be obtained; for indeed these providences which in these last times, should be very affrighting, and terrible, when we go in to the word, we shall find they have a comfortable aspect on the Church, and do presage her greater enlargement, which as the tender buds, and leaves of the fig tree, are put forth to shew the sommers approach, *Luc.* 21. *ver.* 28.

It

It is true the Church is now low, and the work of God meets with very ſad interruptions which are needful, both for trial, and rebuke, but this alſo is ſure which none can deny, that the Lord hath eminently appeared, and done great things for his Church, yea, we muſt ſay, he hath, by a confluence of very remarkable providences, thus condeſcended to ſtrengthen his peoples hands, to confirm ſuch who are ready to ſtagger, even as it were by crutches, anent the greatnes of theſe things which are yet promiſed.

Now to clear this truth a little we would conſider, Firſt; How it is very conſonant to the Scripture and expreſly held forth in the ſame, that in the laſt times, and turn of the Churches caſe from Antichriſt, the Lord will thus appear, in his great ſtrength, and ſet up his ſtandard againſt his adverſaries, yea, will then in a ſpecial way call forth his people, to glorify him by an active teſtimony. 2. That the Lord hath thus begun to appear according to his word is a truth that is alſo undeniable, and ſhould much help to confirm our faith, anent the performance of that which further remains of the Scripture.

1. That this is manifeſt from the word may be thus clear. Firſt, Though the Church militant muſt not want an adverſary, and ſome perſecution from the World, even in her beſt eſtate, yet, we have a ſafe warrant to expect that the Lord will glorify himſelfe in a peculiar way in his people now in theſe latter dayes, by doing, and acting for the truth, as in former ages his glory did moſt appear, dureing Antichriſts Reign, in his Churches ſuffering; for then the faith, and patience of his Saints was to be witneſſed in its ſeaſon, *Rev.* 13: *ver.* 10. And thus he would

ſerve

ſerve himſelfe of his people, and bring forth his glory, until that time of retribution, when theſe who had killed with the ſword, ſhould be killed by the ſword, and theſe who led unto captivity, be ſo dealt with, which doth alſo clearly promiſe ſome ſpecial outletting of the Spirit for acting with theſe gifts of courage, and reſolution ſutable to the ſervice of the Church in the latter dayes; and truely I think it is a great want we ſtudy not more the accomplishing of the promiſes, and how to improve the ſame for gifts, as well as grace in order to the ſeveral times, and neceſſities of the Church.

2. It is very clear from the Scripture that in the laſt dayes, when Chriſt is to raiſe his Church from under the power, and tyranny of Antichriſt he ſhall then appear in a warlike poſture, which John had ſhewed to him, *Rev.* 19: *v.* 13. 14. as one upon the head of his forces, with his veſture dipped in blood, to ſhew that when once the war is begun againſt his adverſary, and this Lion of the tribe of Judz begins to rouze himſelf up, what a terrible appearance he will have in that undertaking; and it is clear, that the Lord hath declared in this his counſel, and will, that his Son Chriſt ſhould in the latter times, take unto himſelf his great povver and reign, *Rev.* 11: *ver.* 17. yea, cauſe the World knovv him to be Head of principalities, and powers, as well as of the Church, for his glory in this truth as a King, which former ages ſeemed in ſo great a meaſure to darken, muſt then clearly ſhine forth. I truely think mens appearing with ſuch violence, and rage againſt ſo concerning a truth, now in theſe dayes doth promiſe ſome eminent appearance of the Lord therein, and that he ſhall yet more ſolemnly aſſert the ſame before the World.

3. Doth

3. Doth not the Scripture point at the laſt times, as that ſpecial time of recompence for the controverſy of Sion to which the Lord hath reſerved a ſolemn triumph of his juſtice, over all his Churches enemies, when he ſhall enquire for the blood of his Saints, ſhed upon the earth ſince the dayes of Abel, at Babylons hand, *Revelat.* 18: *ver.* 24. that great adverſary, who ſtands in law guilty, and hath ſerved her ſelf heire to all the violence & cruelty done in forme ages, for in her hand muſt that cup be found full, which the enemies of the Chuch from the beginning have been filling up, and as ſo many rivers, and fountaines hath run unto this great ſea.

4. It is alſo clear that in the laſt times, when the Lord ſhall bind up the breach of his people, and heal the ſtroke of their wound, who, for ſo long a time, had been trampled under by Antichriſt, he ſhall by ſome ſignal providences roll away this reproach, and ſcandal of meannes, coutempt, and perſecution, ſhall put ſome glory on his Church proportionable to its former abaſement, yea, thus comfort her, according to the dayes, wherein he had afflicted her, and cauſe his peoples uprifing, in meaſure, and kinde to anſwer their low and ſuffering ſtate from Antichriſt, even in the laſt times, when the Lord ſhall make them appear with the face of a Lion, when the feeble ſhall be as David, and as the Angel of the Lord, *Zach.* 12: *ver.* 8. which promiſe doth clearly point at the Churches raiſing, and delivery from Antichriſt; upon the back whereof we finde the Prophet doth foretell the laſt converſion, & incoming of Iſrael.

5. I ſhall only adde what the Scripture doth moſt expreſly ſhew, that the Lord ſhall ſo glorioufly appear in bringing his Church out of Babylon, and executing his judgment on that adverſary, as in the

day when he brought his people out of Egypt, and therefore shall they ſing the ſong of Moſes, and the lamb, *Rev.*15 : *ver.* 3. his great power, and out-ſtretched hand, being no leſſe diſcernable therein, then if they had been ſtanding with Iſrael at the red Sea, when they ſaw their enemies lying dead upon the ſhore; yea, have we not ground to believe, that the Lord ſhall make himſelf very evidently known in raiſing inſtruments, and acting them forth, which hath been already ſeen, and I am ſure the World muſt confeſſe what great things have been done by theſe of whom little was expected.

2. That the Lord hath thus begun to appear, and make himſelf known to the World in theſe laſt ages according to his word is a thing very eaſy to demonſtrat, for.

1. Is it not clear how in theſe laſt times, he hath met his enemies upon their high places, and in their greateſt ſtrength, that by a ſtrong hand he did make room for his truth, when both Law, and force did withſtand the ſame, and put the marks of his wrath on ſuch who would oppoſe the ſpreading of his Kingdome, that they have been as viſible, as ſometimes their rage, and violence againſt the Church was; yea, ſince the Lord begun to lift up a ſtandard for the truth, and call forth his People to act, hath it not been ſeen they have loſed their ground more by underhand treaties, and turning aſide to carnal politick ſhifts then by open force, and violence, which the French Maſſacre, with other ſad inſtances can witnes; for indeed the Church hath ſtill loſt leaſt, by greateſt oppoſition.

2. Have we not ſeen by what dreadful ſhakings, and alterations of the earth, this late glorious reformation of the Church from Antichriſtianiſme hath been

been ushered in, which hath been more ſtrange, and frequent, then in many ages before; hath not the Lord cauſed the Nations ſhake, and the earth to reel like a drunken man, to ſhew men that though he ſuffered long in former times of the Worlds ignorance he will not ſo now bear with oppoſing his truth.

3. Have we not alſo ſeen the Lords raiſing up men fitfor action, in theſe laſt times, men of a great heroick ſpirit, with ſome more then ordinary elevation of the ſame, to appear for his intreſt, ſuch we may ſay that many former ages could not inſtance, in which the Lords helping his People to do great things, his ſuiting them with enduments for the ſervice, and work of the time, hath been moſt diſcernable? Was not that excellent man the Admiral of France, with many others in that place, eminently raiſed up, for the neceſſity of that time, and doe we not finde theſe Princes of Orange William, and Maurice, and Mauritius of Saxony, whom the Lord raiſed againſt Charles the V. and cauſed him flee over the Alpes, yea, what marvellous reſolution, and courage did attend the actings of the confederates of the Low Countryes, and in latter times doe we not finde Guſtavus King of Sweden, Bernard Duke of Weymar, Lantsgrave of Heſſe, with many others eminently raiſed to avenge the Lords quarrel againſt that bloody houſe of Auſtria; have we not alſo ſeen very great inſtruments raiſed up in Brittain, and Ireland, (who were followed with wonderful ſucceſſe,) to act for the truth againſt Antichriſtian Prelacy; and truely we muſt ſay the withdrawing in ſuch a meaſure of that ſpirit of courage, and reſolution, which once was ſo viſibly let forth in the firſt dawning of the Reformation, may ſadly point at a great

decay of zeal, self-confidence, unfaithfulnes as to the improving of opportunities; for the Lord was with his People whileſt they were with him, and did ſingly follow him in his way, but alace, with their departing, it may be ſaid their ſtrength hath departed from them, however, the quarrel is clear for an oppreſſed Peoples acting, upon ſo juſt, ſo neceſſary an account as the intereſt of Religion againſt the cruelty and violent encroachments of Antichriſt, wherein as the Lord hath eminently owned his People, ſo, I dare not queſtion he will yet appear, and ſilence the adverſaries of this truth, by ſuch an argument, againſt which they ſhall not debate.

4. That univerſal deludge of blood which for the 100 yeares paſt hath overflowed much of Europe can be a witnes to this, that the Lord hath taken peace from men who would not embrace the peace of the Goſpel offered in theſe laſt times, and given his enemies who had shed the blood of the ſaints, blood to drink in great meaſure. I am ſure poor Germany can prove this, which for 20 years together was a field of dead men, and France from the dayes of Henry the II. to the eſtabliſhment of Henry the IV. how long was the Low Countryes made a ſtage of war, where many a cruell Spanjard did fall under the ſword of an avenging God, beſids the late bloody warres in Brittain, and Ireland, and what doth this declare, but that Jeſus Chriſt hath taken the fields, and it will not be now with the Kings of the earth, to oppreſſe his Church, and withſtand the truth as in former times.

I ſhall but adde, how wonderfully hath the Lord appeared in delivering his Church at the greateſt extremity, hath turned his enemies counſels and deſignes upon

upon themſelves, brought about the great works of theſe laſt times by meanes ſo unexpected, and improbable, that we may ſay, as to what of his judgement is already execute againſt Antichriſt, hath been no leſſe marvellous then that Jerichoes walls ſhould fall at the ſound of a trumpet of ramhorn; or a cake of barley bread tumbling into the hoſt of Midian ſhould ſmite, and overthrow the ſame; ſurely when we conſider, what the Lord hath done, and how exactly that doth anſwer the Scripture we may have much to confirm us, anent the further accomplishment of his word, and be aſſured that the term of his long ſuffering towards Babylon is at an end, war is denounced, and the execution already begun, which muſt not have a cloſe untill judgement be accomplished into victory.

IV. Ground which may confirm the faith of the ſaints & be as a pledge in their hand of the full accomplishing of the Sripture, yea, that this is near, is this, that *the day is now turned and that prophecyed victory which the Church ſhould have over Antichriſt before the end, is not only begun, but in a great meaſure advanced.*

This is indeed a great confirmation when we ſee ſo marvellous a criſis in the Churches caſe, her recovery from ſo deſperat, and hopeleſſe a diſeaſe already begun, that it ſhall be further perfected; we are made to wonder at the greatnes of theſe things yet promiſed, but why ſhould we not alſo wonder at that which God hath already done for his Church, in our dayes; the Scripture doth ſhew that Antichriſts ruine muſt begin by the word; that this ſtroke ſhall be gradual, & however that great work of God meet with much op-

poſition, yet, it ſhall no more go back in the whole, and muſt we not ſay in all this the word is fulfilled, it hath not hitherto failed the Church, but the event in every circumſtance made to anſwer to the ſame.

Now to clear this we would conſider theſe two. Firſt, that the Churches victory over Antichriſt is this day ſo far advanced. 2. How the Lords very immediat hand hath been moſt diſcernable therein.

1. The firſt I need but name whileſt it is ſo manifeſt, what the Lord hath wrought for his Church, for we have ſeen Kingdomes, and Nations, ſubject themſelves to the truth, the kingdome of Antichriſt grow dark, with the breaking up of the light, and many of his followers made to gnash their teeth, being ſcorched with the heat and power of the goſpel; in how great a meaſure is that intereſt now ſhaken, if we conſider, what the Lord hath wrought, what a great reformation hath been in Brittain and Ireland, through much of France, Germany, Sueden, the Low Countries, Pole, Denemark, yea, even in Hungary and Tranſilvania, ſure this was a great work, which ſhould be marvellous in our eyes, how that Antichriſtian Empire contrived with ſuch wiſdome, underpropt with ſo great ſtrength, whoſe commands not long ſince were received as Oracles, with an aw, and reſpect onely due to God, hath in ſuch a meaſure begun to fall before the power of the word. O the righteous judgement of the Lord, which he hath ſhewed forth upon that adverſary, and ſhould be a pledge to us of the further manifeſtation thereof, an adverſary we may ſay the greateſt that ever the Church had, whoſe little finger hath been ſorer then the loins of all who went before, if we conſider his cruelty over mens bodies, tyrannie over their conſcience, with ſo long a continuance of that trial; in reſpect

of

of whom it may be ſaid Pharaoh was an eaſy task-maſter, Antiochus, and the Roman Emperours milde, who for neer 1200 year did carry on a deſperat, and bloody war againſt the Church.

II. The ſecond which I would at ſome more length follow forth is this, *how the Lords hand and ſomething of an extraordinary providence hath been no leſſe diſcernable in this late raiſing of the Church, and her begun victory over Antichriſt then in the Firſt planting of Chriſtianity by the Apoſtles*, this is a truth which to many may ſeem ſtrange, but when ſeriouſly conſidered, if prejudice do not darken mens judgement, will appear from ſure and ſolid grounds; now to demonſtrat this I would here offer ſome very convincing witneſſes, which may help to ſtrengthen the faith of the Godly, and give Atheiſme ſome dash.

FIRST Witnes to this truth is *that wonderful ſucceſſe which the Goſpel in theſe laſt times hath had*, wherein men muſt ſee the great power of God, and efficacy of the Spirit, in ſome meaſure as manifeſt, as in the firſt riſe of the Chriſtian Church, if we conſider.

1. From what a ſmall ſpark, ſo great a fire did break up which in a short time put Europe in a flame, and made ſo great a change therein, even Luthers appearing againſt Texelius upon the account of his indulgencies, O but Gods time of working may be oft contraire to our time of expecting.

2. What a ſwift progreſſe did the goſpel have? may we not ſay with wonder can a nation be born at once, yet, this we have ſeen how many Nations and Cities in one and the ſame age, yea, in leſſe then 40 yeares, was brought in ſubjection to the truth, and theſe

inſtruments whom ſcarce any durſt own at firſt, made to ſee great Princes with armies on the fields for the intereſts of Chriſt.

3. Have we not ſeen Religion propagated by martyrdome, no leſſe then in the primitive times, and mens eſſaies to ruin the Church helped it further to grow. O what but a divine power could thus bring gold out of iron, and clay, bring a flowriſhing Church out of their aſhes, and turn her poiſon to a preſervative, but alace it is ſad that whileſt men were burned for the truth, and reading the Scripture, their affection did alſo burn in reading the ſame, but now with our liberty there is ſo great a decay.

4. Muſt not the wiſe, and polititians of the World confeſſe this late encreaſe of the Church is a thing above their reach, moſt croſſe to all their rules, which they cannot ſee how in an ordinary way it could be brought about.

4. Were not inſtruments moſt unlikely for ſo great a work if we would judge as men, that ſuch a poor handful, as *Luther*, *Zuinglius*, *Melanchton*, *Bucere*, *&c.* ſhould go forth to confront that power which then made the earth to tremble, might it not ſeem as improbable as the ſending forth of ſome fiſher men to ſubdue the Nations?

6. It is known they were none of the Rabbies of the time, whoſe repute and fame might have purchaſed eaſy acceſſe to their meſſage, nay they were loaded with all the reproach which their adverſaryes could deviſe, with novelty of doctrine, deceit and falſhood in their dealing, repreſented to the World as Monſters, *Luther* was forced to anſwer himſelf a printed relation of his death, how he was carried away ſoul and body by the Devil.

7. Was not the meſſage they carried moſt oppoſit

to

to mens carnal inclinations, to these principles they had suckt in from their infancy, to the religion of their Fathers, yea, in a word, had no outward encouragements, the whole World seemed to combine against them; *Luther*, at his first appearance excommunicated by the Pope, proscribed by the Emperour, and good *Melanchton* was oft made to faint, when he thought on so great a speat of opposition, so that without the convoy of an extraordinary power, nothing could have looked more improbable.

SECOND Witnes that may let the World see a wonderful providence in this late raising of the Church is this, *these sharp assaults which the Church met with from a party, no lesse cruel, and powerful then any adversary which the Church had in the primitive times*, for I am sure the World must confesse that no ordinary mean had wanted for an essay to crush the gospel in its first budding forth, that both counsel, and force, the authority of law, backed with greatest rage and violence in its execution, yea, the power of the Princes of the earth was put forth to the utmost, to withstand this great work of God in these last ages; to clear this I shall only point at some remarkable assaults which did tryst the dauning of the gospel that may shew something above nature going alongst with it,

1. We find a Spanish Emperour devoted to the Popish interest, more powerful then any who went before, brought in on Germany with the very first breaking up of the light, which might seem a dreadful let to the Gospels spreading.

2. The rise of the Boores, and Anabaptist party, whose being so grosse, destructive to civil order, to the interests, and proprieties of men, did look like

a ſad tryſt, and a probable mean to beget much preiudice againſt the truth.

3. That ſad overthrow of the Duke of Saxony, and Landgrave of Heſſe, who were ſuch great patriots to the Church, did then threaten the very ruin of the Proteſtant intereſt in Germany.

4. The Councel of Trent where the Popish party had all their politicks on foot in a ſtrong combination, how to ruin the Church.

5. The Interim of Germany a moſt ſubtile contrivance to divide, and thus break the ſtrength of the Proteſtants, was alſo a ſore aſſault, a ſnare to ſome, and cauſe of perſecution to others.

6. That Spanish Inquiſition eſtablished through Spain, Italy, and the Low Countreyes, a horrid cruel engine which did reach to prevent the ſmalleſt glancings of the truth.

7. The French Maſſacre where not only the Admiral, but moſt of the conſiderable Proteſtants were through all France in a few dayes cut off, O would not this ſeem an irrecoverable ſtroke, together with that Catholick league, which did quickly follow upon the back thereof, a very ſtrong and formidable combination to root out the Proteſtant intereſt.

8. The taking away of Edward the ſixth of England, and eſtabliſhing of a cruel perſecuter Queen Mary did indeed look like a ſtroke that ſhould root out the Church in that part, and deſtroy that famous plantation of the Goſpel, in its tender growth.

9. I muſt adde that which was as ſore an aſſault to the Church as any, ſo grievous a difference which with the firſt breaking up of the work of Reformation did begin betwixt Luther, and Zwinglius about Chriſts preſence in the Sacrament, yea, came to ſuch an height, and with ſo great heat, and animoſity

ſity was followed, as in appearance would have wholy fruſtrat the work they were about.

THIRD Witnes to this truth is *that wonderful patience, and reſolution of the Saints, yea, with much chearfulnes in their greateſt ſufferings, which in theſe late times did appear*, Wherein the world muſt confeſſe that ſame immediat ſupport from Heaven, yea, the Lords owning his Pople in a very extraordinary way, was no leſſe manifeſt, then in theſe primitive ſufferings of the Church from heathens. Sure no bypaſt times, even in theſe bloody dayes of Nero, Domitian, &c. can ſhew more horrid; more ſtrange engines of torment, and cruelty then what in theſe laſt ages the Church did endure from the Popish party, whoſe ſavage, and barbarous uſage of the poor flock of Chriſt, where ever they had acceſſe, may witnes a cruelty more then humane, and as to the number, are they not almoſt without reckoning, who in France, Germany, Brittain, and the Low Countries, beſide other parts, were ſlain within this 150. yeares, for the word of God, and the teſtimony of his truth. Now as this is moſt manifeſt it is alſo known what a divine, and an invincible ſpirit with an aſtonishing courage, and reſolution, did appear in the carriage of the People of God, under this ſore perſecution, how they triumphed over their oppreſſours, and did chearfully meet death in its moſt terrible shape; a thing which the Schooles of Socrates, and Plato, with all their rules could never reach, yea shouldbe reckoned, amongſt the miracles of theſe latter dayes; anent which we would conſider theſe things.

1. That ſomething more then nature, a ſpirit, and reſolution above the ordinary rate of men, yea, ſome-

thing

thing much above themselves, their natural temper, and dispostion did in their most extream sufferings oft appear, and this without the least shadow of affectation, and deceit; I am sure the World in these last ages, yea, the conscience of their persecutors, and of the greatest Atheists must witnes this.

2. That many of the most soft, tender dispostion, many women whose complexion would declare more weaknes then others yet in this late Antichristian persecution, did endure greatest torments, and by suffering triumphed over the fury, and rage of their adversaryes, whereof we have many instances upon record.

3. The World hath been also witnes how serious, & deliberat the Saints were in this, that they made suffering their choise, which they could easily have shunned, at the rate of yeelding something in the truth, but ere they would doe this, or give the adversary such a bribe, they choised to embrace death, and goe to a stake for Christ, even when they wanted not most perswading offers to turn them aside: for instance I would here mention that excellent man in Queen Maryes time Julius Palmer who not only had life, but preferment offered if he would recant, to which his answer was, that he had quit his living in two places for Christ, and now was ready to yeeld his life also on that accompt: likewise one William Hunter, whom Bishop Bonar did urge with many offers to recant, told him it must be Scripture, and not perswasions of that kinde, for he reckoned all earthly things but drosse, and dung in respect of Christ, and at the stake when a pardon by the Sheriffe was offered upon such an accompt, did peremptorly reject the same. Antonius Riceto a Venetian who condemned for the truth had a large offer to have his

patrimony reſtored, which was much morgadged with debt, and made free, beſids his life, if he would but a little yeeld, and likewiſe had his ſon weeping on him for that cauſe, gave this anſwer he was reſolved to loſe both Children, and eſtate for Chriſt. I ſhall adde what we have related of one Herwin, who ſuffered in the low countryes, to whom the Magiſtrates made great intreaties with large promiſes to recant, which he wholly ſlighted, many more inſtances of this kinde here might be ſet down.

4. It is known, that ſuch who were of great repute in the World, and had a large share of outward things to tempt them, did in theſe laſt times moſt chearfully part with the ſame, and choiſe rather ſuffering for the truth: we may inſtance theſe two great witneſſes Iohn Frederick of Saxon, and the Landtſgrave of Heſſe, who under that long impriſonment by Charels the 5. bare out many sharp aſſaults both by threatnings and offers, without yeelding in the leaſt to the prejudice of the truth, yea on this acccompt did the *Duke of Saxon* forgoe with his eſtate, and dignity. *Annas Du Burg* counſellour of the Parliament at Paris of great parts, and repute, who before Henry the II. had an excellent ſpeech in Parliament, for the Proteſtant party, for which by him being impriſoned, did forgoe all his honours, and intereſts in the World, which otherwayes he might have brooked, and embraced death for Chriſt. The Prince of Condee at the maſſacre of Paris, when the King expreſly shewed him he should within 3 dayes dye, if he did not renounce his Religion, told him, his eſtate, and life were in his hand, but ere he renounced the truth he would quite both. Charles de Zeroton a Moravian Barron of great intereſt and authority

thority in that countrey in the late Bohemian perſecution did quite all his eſtate, and poſſeſſion for the Goſpel, notwitſtanding of many large offers, and perſwaſions. We finde alſo in Engeland the Dutches of Suffolk, a lady who lived in the fulnes of the world, and pleaſures thereof, yet in Queen Maries time, did quite both eſtate, and countrey for the truth, and on that accompt did choiſe a very hard lot in other parts.

5. Is it not alſo known how theſe who had been ready to faint, and be overcharged with diſcouragement, yet, at death in the extremity of their ſuffering, did shew a marvellous reſolution, and chearfulnes, a thing which no Atheiſt can poſſibly anſwer, & sheweth Gods very immediat ſupport. *Mr Glover* how ſore was he caſt down, and could feel no joy, or comfort after much wreſtling, but no ſooner did come in ſight of the ſtake, but his ſoul was filled with the joy of the Lord, and with his ſtrength, which forced him to clap his hands, and cry forth to a friend who knew his former damp, and diſcouragement. *Oh Auſtine he is come, he is come*, and thus chearfully went to death. *Thomas Hudſon* a choiſe Chriſtian who ſuffered in Queen Maryes time, when at the ſtake, did ſlip ſuddenly from under the chain, to the aſtonishment of the People, but not from fear of death, but from the want of feeling of Chriſt, which made him full of heavines, but after his turning aſide, that he had got his ſoul poured out to God, he returned as one raiſed from death to life, crying out, *Now I am ſtrong, and do not care what man can do*, and thus with much joy, did yeeld up his ſpirit. Likewiſe *Annas du Burgh* whom we before mentioned being through fear, and diſcouragement drawen

drawen to recant, had no reſt in his ſpirit, until he retracted the ſame, and after did cheatfully undergoe death; with what marvellous reſolution did that excellent man Doctor Cranmer put his right hand to the fire when he came to the ſtake, and ſuffered it to burn without ſhrinking, which as he ſaid he would punish, for ſubſcribing a recantation which was ſo much thereafter his griet.

Laſt I muſt adde, that marvellous joy, and reſolution which the Saints in theſe late times did in their greateſt ſufferings ſhew, is very noture, and known to the world, for their ſuffering was not in a corner, and we may ſay, hath not come ſhort of the primitive Martyrs, but did witnes the ſame ſpirit, and power accompanying them. I cannot paſſe this in a general without giving ſome touch, amidſt ſuch a multitude of convincing inſtances; let us hear bleſſed Bradfoord at the ſtake, thus ſpeak to his fellow ſufferer, *be of good comfort, for we ſhall have this night a merry ſuppper with the Lord.* Latimer to Ridley *we ſhall this day light ſuch a candle in England, as I truſt ſhall never be put out.* Mr Sanders, I *was in priſon until I got into priſon*; and at the ſtake embracing cryes *welcome the croſſe of Chriſt, welcome everlaſting life.* Doctor Farrer to a gentleman who bemoaned his death, and the painfulnes of it *if yow ſee me once ſtir in the fire, beleeve not my doctrine*, as did after appear, for he ſtood without moving in the midſt of the flame. Iohn Ardley, if *every hair of my head were a man, it ſhould ſuffer death in the faith I now ſtand in*, Eliſabeth Folks embraceing the ſtake cryed *fare well World, fare well faith, and hope, and welcome love.* Robert Aguires ſon when at Lile in the Low countries he ſuffered with his father for the truth, in the year 1556. did cry forth at the ſtake, *behold millions of An-*

Angels about us, and the heaven opened to receive us after he had ſometime fixed his eyes on heaven, and when the fire was kindled, ſayes to his father *yet a very little, and we ſhall enter into the heavenly manſion.* Mr. Tims an English miniſter in Queen Maryes dayes thus writs to his friends, I am going to the Bishops colehouſe but ſhall not be long there before I be carried up to my brethren, who are gone to heaven before me in a fiery chariot; followv you after me, where you ſhall find mee ſinging merily at my journeyes end, *holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.* Algerius an Italian martyr thus writs from his priſon a little before his death, *Who would believe that in this dungeon I ſhould finde a paradiſe ſo pleaſant, in a place of ſorrow and death, tranquillity, and hope of life, where others weep I rejoyce. O how eaſy and ſweet is his yoke,* and this he ſubſcribs from that delectable orchard of the Leoline priſon. Guy de Bres *the ringing of my chain hath been ſweet muſick in my eares, all my former diſcourſes were but as a blind mans of colours, in reſpect of my preſent feeling. O what a precious comforter is a good conſcience.* The Lord Henry Otto a Bohemian, who ſuffered in the late perſecution, ſaid to the miniſter, I was troubled, but now I feel a wonderful refreshment. *O now I fear death no longer, I will dye with joy, and on the ſcaffold cryed out, behold I ſee the heavens opened, pointing with his hands at the place where others obſerved a certain brightnes that did dazel their eyes,* and thus dyed with great chearfulnes. I ſhall but adde the laſt words of that holy, and great Mr. Wishart, who thus ſpake amidſt the fire, *this flame doth torment my body, but no whit abate my ſpirits.*

FOURTH. Witnes is *theſe great, and remarkable judgements of God, which in theſe laſt times have befallen*

the adversaryes, and persecutors of the Church, who have been most notour for their oppositiion to the truth; wherein we must say a divine hand hath been so discernable that ordinary observers could not passe the same without a remark, but must acknowledge the righteous judgement of God, that it cometh not by guesse and at an adventure, but doth convincingly seal the word.

This is indeed a grave subject wherein we should be very serious, and sober, for the judgements of God are a great depth, nor can we determine from events but in so far as they answer to the word; it may sometime happen to wicked men according to the work of the righteous, but on the other hand it is a sure truth that God is known by the judgement he executs, and in every age doth point out sin to the World by remarkable strokes, some great examples of judgement, which as a beacon are set forth for men to observe; and truely we may say these remarkable instances of the judgement of God, since he begun to sound a retreat to his Church from Babylon are far beyond other preceeding ages, I would be sparing to repeat what of this kinde is published by others, but that in speaking to this truth, I cannot passe it in a general, whileſt there are so many instances wherein the Lord hath made himself knowen, and these such a convincing seal, and confirmation of the truth, and the following relations, I dare with confidence say there is not any passage or matter of fact, here set down without some clear, and satisfying grounds as to the certainty thereof.

I shall first instance Charles the V. whose undertakings for many years were followed with successe, until once he set himselfe to persecute and oppresse the Church, and bathed his sword in the blood of the

Proteſtants, with his cruel, and unjuſt uſage of the Duke of Saxony, from which time, his affaries begun viſibly to decline, he is forceed to fly before Mauritius, and ſeek a retreat in the furtheſt confines of the empire, and after broken with melancholy, and diſcontent, like another Dioclefian, doth reſign his empire, and turn to a privat life.

Phi'p the I I. of Spain, one of the greateſt perſecutors of the Church in theſe laſt ages, whoſe work was to root out the Proteſtant Religion in his dominions, and therefore ſet on foot that horrid engine of the Inquiſition, yet, at laſt finds all his eſſayes fruſtrat, and after the loſſe of many millions of treaſures, and of ſome 10000 lives by war, yea, of a conſiderable part of the Netherlands, and after the breaking his great Armado at ſea againſt the English by a very remarkable ſtroke from Heaven, is at laſt ſmitten of the Lord in his body by a ſtrange diſeaſe, or rather a confluence of diſeaſes, which his phiſitians could neither underſtand, nor cure, his body falling out in grievous boyls, whence (beſids putride matter) there did iſſue ſuch abundance of Vermin that byſtanders could hardly cleanſe, or endure the horrid ſmel thereof, that ſo he who had put ſo many of the Saints to cruel torments by the Inquiſition, was himſelf tormented, for 2 years together with unexpreſſible pain and anguish.

Henry the I I. of France a moſt violent enemy to the Church, whileſt he had cauſed ſentence *Annas De Burg* to death, having ſolemnly proteſted in ſuch words, *theſe eyes of mine ſhall ſee thee burnt*; a little before the appointed time of his execution, running in the liſts with a ſpear againſt Count Montgomery, is pierced through the eye, with ſuch a wound, that in a ſhort time ſent him to his grave, and fruſtrat his expec-

expectation of seeing the death of that excellent man. His son Charles the IX. that bloody persecutor, I shall mention elsewhere how remarkably the judgement of God did pursue him.

Henry the III, who (whilst he was Duke of Anjou) did assist at that horrid Councel keept at St. Cloud, neer Paris where the Massacre was concluded is some yeares after stobbed to death by a Jacobin frier in that very chamber, a thing which Du Serres doth twice mention with a remark, as a marvellous instance of the judgement of God.

The Duke of Guise, the great executioner of that Massacre, with his brother the Cardinal, a special contriver of the same, are not long after killed by Henry the III. at Blois, with whom they had oft joyned in Councel, to root out the Protestants, and which is very observable, by a specious show of friendship were circumvented, and with solemn Oaths, and promises as treacherously reached as the Admiral, and Protestants by Charles the IX. were at Paris, and these 2 who were his great Counsellers, thus are dealt with, having blood measured out to them for blood, and treachery as they had dealt treacherously with the Saints.

We find also the Duke of Aumale who was a joynt actor with the Duke of Guise in that massacre doth a litle after fall by a shot off the walls at the siege of Rochel, which not only Du Serres, but also Davilla, who was very popish doth particularly relate, where we may see, what a bloody end the great contrivers, and actors of that horrid massacre had.

Henry the IIII. a Prince of excellent parts and great natural accomplishments, was followed with marvellous successe, whilest he owned the truth, yet,

after many victories, and the breaking of the Catholick League, turns popish, and abjures the protestant Religion, but lo within a little, he is stobbed in the mouth by a Jesuit, on which, a protestant Gentleman used this freedome with him, *Sir, you have denyed God, and his truth with your mouth, and he hath given you there a stroke, take heed you deny him not also with your heart, lest the next stroke be there,* which as the French History sheweth, did accordingly fall out, when he was stobbed by Ravilack, Du Serres his own Historiographer doth shew it was through the very heart, and it was too evident, that sometimes before his death, he had turned cordial, and zealous for the popish interest.

Ferdinand the II. a great persecutor of the Church in Germany, who after his victory over Frederick and the Bohemian States, made it his work to root out the Church and Protestant Religion there, and turned that countrey unto a bloody shambles, not sparing any rank, who would not abjure the truth, but a short time after we finde the avenger of blood (in whose sight that of his Saints is precious) persueth him, raiseth up the Sweds for an adversary, under whose sword most of those cruel wretches, that were the Bohemian scourge do fall, turneth Germany, & the Emperours countreys in a field of blood, breaketh that great army which for many years had given Law to Germany, so that as some historians mention, an army of 24000 Captains, because all old expert souldiers was broken in the plain fields with a hudge slaughter, yea, the violence, and cruelty of the popish party, thus measured out to them, as they had measured to the poor Church of Bohemia, and the Palatinat, and *Ferdinand* the Emperour broken with breach upon breach, that men may see, the

judg-

judgement of God pursuing a bloody persecutor.

These barbarous cruel Irish who of late carried on that horrid Massacre there, sparing no Protestants what ever was their age, or rank without compassion to women, or children, O how visibly did the judgement of the Lord reach them, and for that savage blood shed give them blood to drink in great measure, their chief leader *Macguier*, *Machune*, and after *Philomy Oneale* taken, publickly executed, most of them consumed by the sword, their spirits so debased, that a few English, or Scots Souldiers would have chased multitudes of them, so that the World might see divine vengeance eminently pursueing them, which in a few years did root out most of that cruel generation.

We have an observable instance also recorded of *Sir Iames Hamiltone* natural Brother to the Earleof *Arran* who in King *Iames the V.* time was by the Popish Clergy promoted against such as were then suspected of favouring the Protestant Religion, in which place he was most terrible & cruel against all he could reach, yea, so violent that some of his near kinsmen were by him brought under the lash of his power, but lo, when at his greatest height, whilest he is making it his work to crush the Gospel in its budding forth, this is made the mean of his ruine, and by one of his friends whom he pursued on the accompt of Religion, he is accused of treason, and notwithstanding of the soliſtation of the Popish clergy for him as their great Patriot, he is presently arraigned, beheaded, and quartered in the publick street of Edinburg.

It is also known what violent persecutors *Cardinal Beaton*, & his successor Bishop *Hamilton* were, who were no lesse conspicuous instances of the judgements of the Lord in that time, also what befel one frier *Cambel*, who did bitterly rail on that excellent man *Mr Patrick Hamiltoune* when he was burnt at *St Andrews*, to whom

Mr Hamiltoune at the ſtake in great vehemency ſaid, wicked man thou knoweſt the contraire, and haſt ſometime profeſſed the ſame, I appeal thee to anſwer before the judgement ſeat of Chriſt, and within a few dayes after, (which in that time was very notoure) this frier fell ſick. and in great horrour of conſcience as one mad died.

There are indeed many ſuch remarkable inſtances, it is known how the judgement of God did purſue theſe 3 great Apoſtates from the truth, *Olivares* Chancellour of France, *Latomus*, and *Francis Spira*, who after they had quit their profeſſion, and over their light denyed the truth dyed with great horrour of conſcience, crying out to byſtanders what a hell they found within them, *Du Serres* doth ſhew, how that Chancellour of France through the torment, and anguish of his minde, cauſed the very bed to ſhake under him, but ſince there are many examples of this kinde, already upon record, I do the more briefly touch it; and ſhall onely adde ſome few which are worthy of a remark in our own land, how viſibly the Lord did purſue by his judgement ſome who had deſerted the truth, and turned oppoſers, and perſecutors thereof in their promoting Antichriſtian Prelacy contrare to their former profeſſion, and engadgements.

1. I ſhall inſtance *Mr Patrick Adamſon* a Preacher once of great repute in this land, but one whom ambition, and privat intereſt ſwayed more, then the intereſt of Chriſt, who inſinuating himſelf in the Kings favour made it his work to overturn the eſtablished government and diſcipline of the Church until he got himſelf ſetled Archbiſhop of St. Andrews and Prelacy by his means advanced, which the Church from her firſt Reformation from Popery had

had disclaimed, yea, in this height of his power, and grandour, turned an avowed persecutor of his brethren; at which time he used to boast of 3. things that he said could not fail him, his riches, learning, and the Kings favour, but a little after, as was then most known, he was by the righteous judgement of God brought to this pass that his parts did so far wither, and dry up, that in seeking a blessing on his meat he could scarce speak a few words to sence, though once admired for his eloquence, as for his riches, he was forced to get charity from these Ministers whom he before persecuted, and for the Kings favour he was so abhorred by him that as he himself professed when the stroke of God brought him to some sense of his condition, *he was sure the King did care more for the worst of his dogges then for him*, and thus in great misery dyed, cast off by the World whose favour he had onely sought, his publick acknowledgement of his guilt, and apostacy, and of the Lords hand pursuing the same, was by himselfe subscribed, before divers eminent, and worthy Ministers of the Church, who did also by their subscription attest the same, and was afterwards printed.

It is also manifest how the Lord in his judgement did pursue that wretched man his successour *Bishop Spotswood* who in a more subtile way did endeavour the overturning the discipline, and liberties of the Church, for setting up of Prelacy, and by underhand dealing got himselfe first thrust in Glasgow, and after to be Archbishop of *St andrews*, yea, at last, was Chancellour of Scotland, his eldest Son a Barron in Fife, and his second Son President of the Session, his Daughter also married to Rosline then a considerable Barron, but let us see whither this ends, what an eminent example in all these respects of the

jud-

judgement of God he was, and therein the propheey of that great man *Mr Welsh* accomplished, who did foretel in a letter whileſt he was priſoner at Blackneſſe, that he should be as a ſtone caſt out of a ſling by the hand of God, his name should rot, and a malediction on his poſterity, and truely this is known what becǫme of himſelf in the year 1638. How he was excommunicated by the Church, did flee into England where in great miſery he dyed; his eldeſt Son *Sir Iohn Spotſwood* was ſometime brought to beg his bread, which is known to many yet alive, his ſecond Son who was Preſident of the Seſſion, being taken at the battel of Philip-hauch, was beheaded at St Andrews, and his Oy young Darzie beheaded at Edinburgh, and for his daughter who was married to Roſſin, it is knowen how quickly after that eſtate was rooted out, and turned from that race.

— *Mr James Nicolſonne* one very eminent in his time for parts, and judgment in the affaires of the Church, yea, once very zealous for the truth, and a great opposer of Prelacy, when it firſt begun to aſſault the Church, but at laſt was turned aſide, by Court inſinuations, gets the Bishoprick of Du[illegible], yea, turns moſt fordward to promote that intereſt, but lo in a short time he is ſtricken by the Lord with ſickneſs, and great horrour of conſcience within, can get no reſt, his friends in vain endeavouring to comfort him, and when they would have brought phiſitians, he told them his diſeaſe was of another kind, for which they could give no phiſick, which preſſed him more then his ſickneſs, that againſt ſo much light, and over the belly of his conſcience he had oppoſed the truth, and yeelded up the liberties of the Kingdome of Chriſt to pleaſe an earthly King, and he charged his Children that nothing which he had acquired ſince he

was

was Prelate, should go amongst the rest of his estate, and thus in great bitternes, and grief died, whereupon his brother in Law *Mr David Lindsey* then a witnes made some Verses in Latin.

Solatur frustra conjunx, solantur amici,
Et medicum accersi, sedulo quisque jubet.
Sed dare solamen nemo, dare nemo salutem,
Te præter poterit, Rex Iacobe, mihi,
Quæ corpus gravat, atque animam, tantum exime mitræ,
Huic caput, hujus onus me premit, & perimit.

Mr. William Couper, sometime minister of Perth, one who witnessed much zeal against Prelacy, both by preaching, and writting, in a letter to *Mr. George Grhame*, who had writ to him entreating his charity towards his own conforming, he hath these words. *Sir, for your self I never hated you, but the worse you are in I never loved, how dangerous is their estate who cannot rise but with the fall of many, who in Christ have entred the right way to the ministry, closing these fountaines which God hath opened; doing in a matter of conscience with doubting, turns mens light to darknes, whence follows induration, therefore I cannot stand with you except to witnes to God in my heart against you*, and thus shuts up his letter, *consider your selfe where you was, and where you now are, & quantulum sit illud proper quod nos reliquisti*, this I set down to shew what sometimes he was, yet shortly after this man turns to a Bishoptick, was loathed by the Godly in that time, some of his old friends brought his own sermons to him, & desired him to reconcile them with his after actings, which did visibly affright & disquiet him, and one day being at pastime near to Leith, he was suddenly terrified with apprehension that he saw armed

med men coming upon him; these who were with him told him, there was no such thing, it was only a dream, whereupon he became silent, and fell a trembling, but after he went home, took bed, and dyed in much anguish, and trouble of spirit, being observed to point oft with his finger to the earth crying out these words, *a fallen Star, a fallen Star.* It was also known how for divers years, he had been seised upon with an Hypochondriack distemper apprehending he was all glasse, whereupon worthy *Mr Simson of Sterling* who had sometimes been his familiar, hearing of his Court-advancement had this line.

Aureus, heu, fragilem confregit malleus urnam.

A very convincing instance of the judgement of God in that time, was one *Mr Andrew Foster*, Minister at Dumfermling who being sent Commissioner to the Assembly at Glasgow 1610, and solemnly adjured, as he should answer to Jesus Christ, by his brethren, not to consent to any alteration of the government of the Church, yet notwithstanding voted for Prelacy, having got 50 Merks from the Earle of Dumbar, who made use of that argumment to break some of these wretches, a small sum indeed to sell the cause of Christ, and by him very dear bought, for after his return, he falleth in sicknes, and upon his recovery from that was seised with horrour of conscience, so that he run out of the pulpit whilest he was going to preach, confessing he had sold Christ at that Assembly for money, that being poor, and having a numerous family, he chused rather to make haste, then beleeve, & thus laid a side his ministry requesting *Mr John Murrey*, who then was silenced by the Bishop

Bishop that for Christs sake he would take the charge of that place, after which he fell in a great distraction and became in some measure madde, and though he did something recover, yet, dyed in great infamy, poor, and drowned in debt, a very convincing example of the judgement of God. This old *Mr Row of Carnock* being then a minister in the same Presbitery sets down under his hand which he most certainly knew.

I shall onely adde 2 remarkable instances of the Lords judgement within these few years that should not be past without a remark.

The first relats to a considerable family in this countrey, who made it their work to trouble, and persecute the Minister of that Parish, an eminently holy and faithful man, yea, upon the accompt of his faithfulnes; the old Laird of that house, out of malice doth pursue him with a false libel before the Synod, using all means he could to reproach his name, having it as his design, either to get him broken, and put out of the Parish, or at least to crush his spirit, and weaken him in the exercise of the ministry; but doth there meet with a disappointment, the Lord clearing the innocence of his servant, and the malice of the other, so that even such who otherwayes wanted not a prejudice at him, were forced to acknowledge this, at which time that Gentleman, whileſt he went to the stable where his horses were, being then at the Synod upon that accompt, is in the place stricken with sicknes, forced to haste home and take bed and there seised with horrour of conscience, which made him oft cry, intreating most earnestly for his Minister whom he had thus persecuted, and oft had these words, *O to see his face*, yea told his friends that if he would not come to him, they would cause carry him to his house, but his Lady out of malice did in a most

moſt rude, and violent way hinder the Miniſters acceſſe to him, and thus that poor Gentleman in great horrour, and anguish dyeth: after his death his Lady doth ſtill purſue the quarrel with no leſſe malice until she alſo falleth ſick, and therewith had much terrour upon her conſcience, yea, did no leſſe cry out for the Miniſter, who then was providentially abſent, ſo that she was put to cry, and in that denyed, which she did hinder to her poor husband, though at laſt, he came to her before her death, to whom she with much bitternes confeſſed her wrong. After this a young man their chaplain, who had been engadged by them to appear as a witnes againſt that godly man was ſo terrified in his conſcience that he could get no reſt until he went to the next Synod, to acknowledge that horrid ſin, in bearing falſe witnes againſt his Miniſter, but being there kept by ſome from a publick appearance, he went to another part of the countrey, where it is certainly reported he dyed diſtracted. Now laſt of all the young Laird who did ſucceed in that eſtate, would needs purſue the quarrel, and finding more acceſſe through the change of the time, did ſo endeavour with ſome who were in power, that an order was paſt for banishing him out of that Parish, and though he was then otherwayes ſtaged, upon the accompt of the publick cauſe, yet, it was known the violent purſuit of that Gentleman was the main cauſe of this ſentence, which theſe who had hand in paſſing it did themſelves confeſſe, for he had ſolemnly ſworn, that if he lived in that place, that man should not be Miniſter there, but lo a few dayes after, having returned to his houſe, and boaſting, how he had kept his word, and now got his Miniſter caſt out of the parish, he was ſuddenly ſtruck by the Lord with an high fever, which plucked him away

away in the very ſtrength of his yeares. This I had related as it is here ſet down, from a grave Chriſtian, the party himſelfe being preſent, which he did humbly decline to relate, though he could not but aſſent thereto.

Second is one David Macbryar who was a member of the late Parliament being one of the commiſſioners of the Burrowes, a man moſt notour in the countrey where he lived for a lewd, and groſſe practice, but moſt remarkable and knowen beyond others for his violence, and rage againſt the Godly, as he ſhewed by his carriage, both in the Parliament, and afterwards where he could have acceſſe did ſet himſelfe to trouble, & perſecute ſuch under that reproachful name of fanaticks, but within ſome time thereafter whileſt he was forced to retire by reaſon of debt, for fear of caption, he was found one day walking alone by one who was then comed out of the North to that countrey, and had ridden forth, to ſee if he could catch any of that party whom he judged was then lurking, and ſuppoſing upon his rencounter that he was ſurely one of theſe, would needs apprehend him, but he upon his reſiſtance, & ſtrugling againſt him was by him run through with a ſword, and immediatly killed on the place upon that very accompt, and perſwaſion, that he was a phanatick, and rebel as he then tearmed him, thus he who had declared himſef an enemy to the people of God whom he was wont in reproach to call phanaticks, was himſelf under that very notion, and upon that ground cutted down by one of his own ſtamp, and principles. O was not this the finger of God, and a convincing proof of his righteous judgment.

FIFTH Witnes which holds forth the Lords eminent

minnt appearing, and something of an extraordinary power, in the late raising, and reformation of the Church from Antichristianisme, is this *that large measure of the Spirit, and outletting thertof which did convincingly follow the Gospel and ministry of the word in these last times*, a truth which we must say hath been manifest, and by many solemn proofes thereof demonstrat; no lesse then in the first planting of the christian Church.

It is undeniable how great a witnes to the truth, the Spirit, and down-powring thereof is, for this is Gods own seal, which is not put to a lye, or falshood, thus he beares witnes to his work in the hearts of his people; and by this also the Lord doth seal, and attest the doctrine of the Church, and commission of his servants who publish the same, yea, at some special seasons, when the truth hath least countenance, or encouragement from without, times of contradiction, when men will not receive its testimony, and a great speate of opposition is to the Gospel, then hath this in a more full and large measure been discernable; thus did the Lord eminently own, and confirm the Christian Religion in the dayes of the Apostles, and for some following ages, by so great a downpowring of the Spirit, such visible, and extraordinary effects thereof as did then astonish the World, and force men to confesse something above nature, that this was surely the great work, and power of God; and have we not also cause to say, that thus the Lord hath born a very solemn testimony to his truth, the work of reformation, and doctrine of the reformed Churches in these late times; anent which I dare appeal bystanders, yea, the adversaries to their conscience, if without shutting their eyes, they could shift the conviction of a con-

convincing appearance of God in the power, and efficacy of the Spirit, even in a more then ordinary way accompanying the word, and ordinances, a power which carried kingdomes, and cities before it, yea in a very short time over the belly of greatest violence, and oppositon: to clear this a little I shall point at some few remarkable evidences, which might ſtare the groſſeſt of men in the face, and in ſome meaſure convince them of this truth,

1. It is evident that marvellous conqueſt which the Goſpel had in Germany, by the miniſtry of *Luther*, *Melanchton*, *Bucer*, *Martyr*, *Muſculus*, and a few others of theſe excellent inſtruments whom the Lord then ſent forth, O was not this a day of the Spirit, and powring forth thereof in a large meaſure, a day of the goſpels triumph, not by might, or by power, yet ſuch as before it the World could not ſtand, cities and countryes might then be ſaid to be born at once, the arme of the Lord revealed with the ſame, that men were either ſcorched, or truely warmed and gained thereby. Did not that marvellous power, and efficacy of the ſpirit alſo attend the miniſtry of *Zuinglius*, and *Oecolampadius*, in Zurick, and Baſile, when ſo through a reformation followed, to the throwing down of Images, abolishing of the Maſſe by publick authority notwithſtanding of its long continuance, and this in a short time; the ſpirit, and power of God did very eminently appear alſo, in theſe famous plantations of the Goſpel by the Miniſtry of *Calvine*, *Farel*, and *Virets* in Geneva, Lauſanna, and other adjacent Provinces. It is written in the life of *Virets*, that at *Lyons* which was a great populous city, he preached in an open place, where divers thouſands were converted to the truth, yea, ſome who came by with no purpoſe to hear,

only

only out of curiosity stepped in, were so wrought on & overcome with the power of the word, as for that time made them neglect their other businesse.

2. That great successe which did attend the ministry of *Mr Wishart* in Scotland can also witnes this truth, whence so marvellous a change did quickly follow, in these places where he preached through *Angus*, *Lothian*, and the western parts, yea, how much the spirits of the people were then raised and affected with the word, but this being a thing so known from the historyes of that time, I only name.

3. Besides these which are more known, and upon publick record, I must here instance a very solemn, and extraordinary outletting of the spirit, which about the year 1625. and thereafter was in the West of Scotland, whileſt the persecution of the Church there was hot from the prelatick party; this by the prophane rabble of that time was called the Stewarton Sicknes, for in that parish first, but after through much of that countrey particularly at Irwine under the ministry of famous *Mr Dickson* it was most remarkable, where it can be said (which divers Ministers, and Christians yet alive can witnes) that for a considerable time, few Sabbaths did passe without some evidently converted, and some convincing proofes of the power of God accompanying his word, yea that many were so choaked and taken by the heart, that through terrour, the spirit in such a measure convincing them of sin, in hearing of the word, they have been made to fall over, and thus carried out of the Church, who after proved most solid and lively Christians, and as it was knowen some of the most grosse who used to mock at religion, being engadged, upon the fame that went abroad of such things, to go to some of these parts where the Gospel

Gospel was then most lively, have been effectually reached before their return, with a visible change following the same, and truely, this great spring tide which I may so call of the Gospel, was not of a short time, but for some yeares continuance, yea thus like a spreading moor-burn, the power of Godlines did advance from once place to another, which put a marvellous lustre on these parts of the countrey, the savour whereof brought many from other parts of the land to see the truth of the same.

4. I must also mention that solemn Communion at the Kirk of the Shots 20 June 1630. at which time there was so convincing an appearance of God, and down powring of the Spirit, even in an extraordinary way, that did follow the ordinances especially that sermon on the, Munday 21 June, with a strange unusual motion on the hearers, who in a great multitude were there conveened of divers ranks, that it was known, which I can speak on sure ground, near 500 had at that time a discernable change wrought on them, of whom most proved lively Christians afterward, it was the sowing of a seed through Clidesdeal so as many of most eminent Christians in that countrey, could date either their conversion, or some remarkable confirmation in their case from that day; and truely this was the more remarkable that one after much reluctance by a special, and unexpected providence was called to preach that sermon on the Munday, which then was not usually practised, and that night before by most of the Christians there was spent in prayer, so that the Mundays work, as a convincing return of prayer might be discerned.

5. I shall here also instance that solemne, and great work of God, which was in the Church of Ireland

ſome years before the fall of prelacy about the year 1628. and ſome yeares thereafter, which as many grave, and ſolid Chriſtians yet alive can witnes, who were there preſent, was a bright, and hot ſun-blink of the Goſpel, yea, may with ſobriety be ſaid, to have been one of the largeſt manifeſtations of the Spirit and of the moſt ſolemn times of the down-powring thereof that almoſt ſince the dayes of the Apoſtles hath been ſeen, where the power of God did ſenſibly accompany the word with an unuſual motion upon the hearers, and a very great tack as to the converſion of ſouls to Chriſt, the goings of the Lord then full of Majeſty, and the shout of a King was heard in the ſolemn meetings of his people, that as a judicious old Chriſtian, who was there preſent, did expreſſe it, he thought it was like a dazeling beam, and ray of God, with ſuch an unuſual brightnes, as even forced byſtanders to an aſtonishment, a very effectual door opened, with more then ordinary enlargement, which the Miniſters of Chriſt there did find in preaching the word, whileſt the people might be ſeen hearing the ſame in a melting frame with much tendernes of ſpirit; ſurely this was the very power of God, a convincing ſeal to the truth, and miniſtry of his Servants, who were then perſecuted by the Prelats, yea, a thing which as it was known had an awful impreſſion, and was a terour to their adverſaries. I remember amongſt other paſſages what a worthy Chriſtian told me, how ſometimes in hearing the word, ſuch a power, and evidence of the Lords preſence was with it, that he hath been forced to riſe, and look through the Church, & ſee what the people were doing, thinking from what he felt on his own ſpirit it was a wonder how any could go away without ſome change upon them. And then it was

ſweet

ſweet, and eaſy for Chriſtians to come 30, 40 miles to theſe ſolemn Communions which they had, and there continue from the time they came, until they returned, without wearying, or making uſe of ſleep, yea, but little either meat, or drink, and as ſome of them profeſſed did not feel the need thereof, but went away moſt fresh, and vigorous, their ſouls ſo filled with ſenſe of God.

6. That was alſo a remarkable time wherein the Lord did let forth much of the Spirit on his people in the year 1638, when this Nation did ſolemnly enter in Covenant, which many yet alive at this day do know, how the ſpirits of men were raiſed, and wrought on by the word, the ordinances lively, and longed after, for then did the Nation own the Lord, and was viſibly owned by him, much zeal, and an enlarged heart did appear for the publick cauſe, perſonal reformation ſeriouſly ſet about, and then alſo was there a remarkable gale of providence that did attend the actings of his people, which did aſtoniſh their adverſaries, and forced many of them to feign ſubjection. Alace how is our night comed on, for the Lord hath in anger covered the face of the Daughter of Zion with a dark cloud.

7. Muſt not we alſo ſay, ſince the land was engadged by Covenant to the Lord in theſe late times, what a ſolemn outletting of the ſpirit hath been ſeen, a large harveſt with much of the fruit of the Goſpel diſcernable, which we may ſay with a warrant, hath been proven in the inbringing of thouſands to Chriſt, a part whereof now are in glory, and many yet live who are a viſible ſeal to this truth, of vvhom I am ſure ſome vvill not loſe the remembrance of theſe ſweet refreshing times, which the land for ſeveral yeares did enjoy of the Goſpel and of many ſolemn

munions, where a large blessing with much of the Spirit, and power of God was felt accompanying the ordinances; if it were expedient to set down circumstances, I could here point at many such remarkable times, and places, which should clearly demonstrat this.

Now besids these more publick, & obvious proofes, it is knowen what a great testimony, the experience of the godly in these late times could give to this truth, what they have in a large measure felt of the power, and refreshing outlettings of the spirit within their soul, yea, how oft after soreest downcasting have been wonderfully raised above themselves, and filled with the consolation of God, and joy unspeakable; this would indeed make a great volum, to reckon over all these instances, even these whose experience in these last ages could in a large measure witnes this truth, only to shut this up I shall name these two.

1. *Mr Welsh*, and *Mr Forbes* two great witnesses of Christ in this land, when they were prisoners, give this accompt of their case in a letter to *Mr Iames Melvin*, and his Uncle, then at London, which under the said *Mr Melvins* hand is set down in a manuscript of his, their words are these. *Dear Brethren, we dare say by experience, and our God is witnes we lye not, that unspeakable is the joy, that is in a free, and full testimony of Christs royall authority, unspeakable is the joy of suffering for his Kingdome* (For on that truth was their suffering stated.) *we had never such joy, and peace in preaching of it, as we have found in suffering for the same, we spake before in knowledge, we now speak by experience that the Kingdome of God consists in peace and joy*, and in an other letter, thus they say, *our joy hath greatly abounded, since the last day* (Which was after passing sentence of death

death on them by assize at *Linlithgow*) *so that we cannot enough wonder at the riches of his free grace, that should have vouchafed such a gift upon us to suffer for his Kingdome in which there is joy unspeakable, and glorious, and we are rather in fear, that they* (to wit the sufferings) *be not continoued, and so we be robbed of further consolation then that they should encrease. Surely there is great consolation in suffering for Christ, we dow not expresse unto you the joy which our God had caused abound in us.*

2. I shall also mention that great Servant of Christ *Mr Rutherfoord* whose Letters now published can witnes what solemn dayes of the Spirit and sensible outlettings thereof, he oft had in his experience. Though books can tell but little what he really felt, and enjoyed. I shall onely set down some of his last, and dying expressions, which I had from these who were then present, and caused write down the same from his mouth, that may shew how lovely he also was in his death, and how well that did correspond with his former life, some of his words are these, *I shall shine, I shall see him as he is, and all the fair company with him, and shall have my large share, it is no easy thing to be a Christian, but as for me I have got the victory, and Christ is holding forth his armes to embrace me. I have had my feares, and faintings as an other sinful man to be carried through creditably, but as sure as ever he spake to me in his word, his spirit witnessed to my heart, saying fear not, he had accepted my suffering, and the outgate should not be matter of prayer, but of praise.* he laid also, *thy word was found, and I did eat it, and it was to me the joy, and rejoycing of my heart*, and a little before his death after some fainting, he sayeth *now I feell, I believe, I enjoy, I rejoyce*, and turning to *Mr Blair* then present he said,

I feed on Manna, I have Angels food, my eyes shall see my Redeemer, I know that he shall stand at the latter day on the earth, and I shall be caught up in the clouds to meet him in the air, and afterwards hath these words, *I sleep in Christ, and when I awake, I shall be satisfyed with his likenes. O for armes to embrace him*; and to one speaking anent his painfulnes in the ministry; he cryeth out *I disclaim all, the port I would be in at, is redemption and forgivenes of sins through his blood.* And thus full of the spirit, yea, as it were overcome with sensible enjoyment, he breaths out his soul. His last words being *Glory, Glory, dwelleth in Emmanuels land.*

SIXTH Witnes is *that convincing appearance of an extraordinary, and Apostolick spirit on some of these instruments whom the Lord raised up in these last times, and these great enduments where with they were sent forth for the service of the Church, and overthrow of the kingdome of Antichrist*, a truth which we must say, if not in such measure yet hath been no lesse evident then in these primitive times, when the Christian Church was planted.

It is clear that extraordinary gifts, and enduements have been let forth to the Church under the New Testament, for with the first dawning of the Gospel there were both Apostles, & Prophets raised up, it cannot be also denyed that since the Cannon of the Scripture was closed, yea, in these late ages there hath been very extraordinary men given to the Church, who had special revelations from the Lord of his minde anent things to come, which though we should not now look after, yet herein did the Lord remarkably condescend, when some great piece of service, and necessity of the Church did more call for it; and truely

truely these were led in no other path then that of the word, though they had a more special discovery, and immediat inbreathing of Gods minde as to the application thereof in particular cases, neither did they presse upon mens conscience to credit the same, but were most cautious, witnessing much humble sobriety on that account.

It is knowen what extraordinary instruments, how wonderfully called, and qualified, *Luther*, *Zuinglius*, *Calvine*, *Mr Wishart*, and *Mr Knox* were, whom God sent in these later dayes to grapple with Antichrist, and sound a retreat to his Church from Babylon, likewise *Melanthon*, *Beza*, *Bucere*, and *Matyr*, with divers in Engeland such as *Latimer*, *Ridley*, *Bradsoord*, *&c.* Who indeed were burning, and shining lights in their time, mighty in the Scripture, fervent in spirit, were cloathed with the power, and authority of God, before which the World could not stand. But besides these famous witnesses, of whose life we have something this day on publick record, I must here crave liberty to set down a few moe, more late instances of our own Church in Scotland to confirm this truth, such as are but little known to the World, nor any thing of their lives published, which I think a great losse to after generations, who we may say (and this with a warrant, and in sobriety) were men truely extraordinary, eminently serviceable in the work of the Lord, yea, of a Prophetick, and Apostolick Spirit, and such who through grace, did not even come short of the first three; I mean not only these before mentioned but also some of these great lights; who were in the first age of the Church after the ascension of Christ.

1. I shall instance *Mr John Welsh* whom the Lord called

led forth to the miniſtery at Kirkcubright in *Galloway* and afterwards was tranſported to the Church of *Air*, whom *Mr Rutherfoord* in one of his bookes calleth that heavenly Prophetical and Apoſtolick Man of God, and sheweth that from the witneſſes of his life, he had this accompt, that of every 24 houres, he gave uſually eight to prayer, if other neceſſary, and urgent dueties did not hinder, yea, ſpent many dayes and nights which he ſet apart in faſting, and prayer, for the condition of the Church, and the ſufferings of the reformed Churches abroad, I can alſo adde this, from very ſure information (and truely anent any of theſe particulars, I ſeriouſly ſtudie to have ſatisfying grounds anent the certainty thereof) that it was his uſe even in the coldeſt winter nights, to riſe for prayer, and oftimes his wife who was an excellent woman hath riſen to ſeek after him, where he hath been found lying on the ground weeping, and wreſtling with the Lord, yea, ſometimes would have been much of the night alone, in the Chnrch of *Aire* on that accompt. One time eſpecially his wife finding him overcharged with grief he told her he had that to preſſe him which she had not, the ſoules of 3000 to anſwer for, whileſt he knew not how it was with many of them. And an other time whileſt she found him alone, his ſpirit almoſt overcharged with anguish, and grief, upon her ſerious enquiry, ſaid, that the times which were to come on Scotland, were heavy, and ſad though she should not ſee them, and this for the contempt of the Goſpel

Whileſt he was priſoner in the Blackneſſe in a letter to a Chriſtian lady, he giveth this accompt *what large joy he had to ſuffer for ſuch a truth, that Jeſus Chriſt was a King, and had a viſible Kingdome in the World, even his Church, which was as free to keep its Courts,*

Courts, and exerce diſcipline by vertue of an intrinſick power from Chriſt, as any Kingdome on the earth, for which he was ready to lay down his life, yea, would rejoyce to be offered up a ſacrifice on ſo glorious a truth, in the cloſe of that letter, he doth alſo forewarn that *judgement was coming to Scotland which ſhould be blood, firſt by an inteſtine ſword, and then by the ſword of a ſtranger, and that a great ſacrifice ſhould be there, both of great men, and mean,* the fulfilling whereof hath ſince been very ſenſible and is known by many alive, who had that letter long before the late troubles begun; whileſt he was thus priſoner, two remarkable paſſages I have had confirmed by divers worthy of credit, ſome of whom ſhewed me they had them from theſe who were moſt familiar with the perſones themſelves, they are indeed ſtrange, but we muſt alſo conſider he was an extraordinary man.

The firſt was this, that one night whileſt he did expound the Scripture after his ſupper, in the priſon (as his cuſtome was,) whileſt he, with much power, and authority was preſſing home the truth, one of the company who had ſome charge in the Caſtel, fell a jearing, which *Mr Welſh* obſerving, and looking earneſtly to him, did preſently cloſe the Bible, and ceaſe, and a little after having a drink in his hand, he ſayeth to a friend at the table before all that were preſent, there is one ſo profane and groſſe as to contemn and mock at the word of the Lord, but ere a little God ſhall ſmite him, with a remarkable ſtroke of his judgement, which accordingly fell out to the aſtoniſhment of the company, for that man did preſently drop down to the ground, and dyed. A lady that was then Popiſh being preſent by reaſon of a friend of hers that was priſoner in the caſ-

tle, was so moved therewith that it proved an help to her after-conversion.

The other passage is this, one *Iohn Steward*, an eminent Christian who lived at *Aire* having comed to visit *Mr Welsh* in prison, found him in a more then ordinary way troubled, and sad, and upon his enquiry thereanent, he sayeth, *Iohn*, ye should not be here, go home to *Aire*, for the plague of God is broken up in that place, and cause *Hew Kennedy* provest of that toun (who was also a very singular Christian) conveen the people to the streets, and pray together, and the Lord shall hear *Hew Kennedy*, and remove that stroke; this at the first did something astonish the said *Iohn*, and put him to question its truth, having so lately comed out of that place, but at his return found it so: and accordingly in every thing it fell out as the man of God had shewed.

After his banishment to which the King did change the sentence of death past upon him at *Linlithgo*, he in a very short time acquired the French tongue, with such a facility therein, as was thought strange by these who knew it; Trochrig in his commentary on the Ephesians, sets down this passage how being called to preach at Salmur a famous University, yea, one of the most learned auditories in France, he did with such boldnes, and authority preach, as though he had been before the meanest congregation, whereat Trochrig being astonished, could not but on his acquaintance with him question him thereanent, whence he had such confidence, and was so litle moved, whilest he preached before strangers, so grave, and judicious an auditory, and in a strange tongue, to whom in a humble way as one more dejected, then lifted up, he gave that answer, when he considered his being before the Lord, & that he

he was delivering his meſſage, he could not regard, either great, or ſmall, but all flesh did then go out of his minde.

Whileſt he was Miniſter at St. Jane de Angeli a Proteſtant town in France, where his Miniſtry was much bleſſed with ſucceſſe, the civil warres did break up, where that city was twice beſiged on the Proteſtant intereſt, during which time theſe paſſages fell out moſt remarkable, one was, the town being ſore ſtraited, and ready to be taken, the enemies having raiſed a battery, and by a cloſs approach had made a great breach in the wall, *Mr Welſh* hearing thereof (who had much encouraged the people, that their adverſaries ſhould not then prevail) went himſelf with the Canonier up the vvals, & deſired he vvould charge ſuch a piece of cannon, and ſhoot, for God ſhould direct that ſhot, and cauſe it proſper, vvhich accordingly did to the aſtoniſhment of onlookers diſmount that battery, and the Lord ſo ordered things after, that the King did parley on favourable termes vvith the city, and did only himſelf vvith his court come in vvithout doing any violence. An other marvellous paſſage vvas this, the follovving Sabbath ſome of the godly in that place, fearing *Mr Welſh* his hazard, did ſeriouſly deal vvith him that he vvould forbear to go forth, and preach, the Court being there, from vvhich he by no intreaty vvould be hindred, but ſhevved them he vvould adventure to preach the vvord to his people, and truſt the Lord vvith vvhat concerned himſelfe, being more grieved at their fear, and deſpondence, and that day had a very great auditory both of friends, and others, vvho came upon the fame of ſuch a man, but in time of ſermon, a great man of the Court, vvith ſome of the Kings ovvn guard vvas ſent to bring him forth-

vvith

vvith before the King, and vvhileſt he vvas entring the Church vvhich had ſome difficulty by reaſon of the multitude, *Mr Welſh* did turn himſelfe tovvard that entry, and deſired the people to give vvay to one of the great Piers of France that vvas coming in, but after vvhileſt he vvas coming near the pulpit, to execute his commiſſion, by putting force on the Servant of Chriſt, for his deſiſting, he did vvith great authority ſpeak to him, before all the people, and in the name of his Maſter Jeſus Chriſt charged him that he would not diſturb the Worship of God; wherewith that man was ſo affrighted that he fell a shaking, yea was forced to crutch down, and make no further trouble. A third paſſage no leſſe remarkable was upon the cloſe of Sermon, whileſt *Mr Welſh* with much ſubmiſſion, went to the King who was then greatly incenſed, and with a threatning countenance asked, what he was, and how he durſt preach hæreſy ſo near his perſon, and with ſuch contumacy carry himſelf, to which with due reverence bowing himſelf he did anſwer. I am Sir, the Servant, and Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe truth I preached this day, which if your Majeſty rightly knew, ye would have judged it your duety to have comed your ſelf, and heard, and for my doctrine I did this day preach theſe 3 truths to your People. 1. That man is fallen, and by nature in a loſt condition, yea, by his own power, and abilities is not able to help himſelfe from that eſtate. 2. That there is no ſalvation, or deliverance from wrath by our own merits, but by Jeſus Chriſt and his merit alone. 3. I did alſo preach this day the juſt liberties of the Kingdome of France, that your Majeſty oweth obedience to Chriſt onely, who is Head of the Church, and that the Pope, as he is an enemy to Chriſt, and his truth, ſo

alſo

also to the Kings of the earth, whom he keepeth under slavery to his usurped power. Whereat the King for a time keeping silence with great astonishment turned to some about him, and said, surely this is a man of God. Yea, after did commun with him, and with great respect dismissed him. The year following whilest the differences betwixt the King, and Protestant party did grow, that city was again besieged, taken and in part sacked as *Mr Welsh* did publickly foretel, at which time, it is known, how the King past a solemn order, that none should in the least wrong *Mr Welsh*, or any thing that belonged to him under highest paines, and did after give a safe conduct to him, for transporting himself to England where he died, King James refusing his return to his own countrey, though earnestly petitioned by his wife for her husbands health.

During his sickness he was so filled, and overcome with the sensible enjoyment of God, that he was sometime overheard in prayer, to have these words, *Lord, hold thy hand, it is enough, thy servant is a clay vessel, and can hold no more.*

II. I shall also here instance *Mr Robert Bruce* who in a very extraordinary way was called to the Ministry, having for a long time followed the study of the Law, both in this countrey, and in France, yea, had some ground to expect a place amongst the Lords of the Session, his father being then a considerable Barron, who had many friends, but a more pressing, and irresistible call from God did otherwise determine.

Whilest he was in the Ministry at Edinburgh he shined as a great light through the whole land, the power and efficacy of the spirit most sensibly accompanying the word he preached, he was a terrour to evil doers, and the authority of God did so appear upon

pon him, and his carriage, with such a Majesty in his countenance, as forced fear, and respect from the greatest in the land, even these who were most avowed haters of Godlines, yea, it was known what an awful impression King James had of him, and did once give him that testimony before many, that he judged *Mr Bruce* was worthy of the halfe of his Kingdome.

He was a man that had much inward exercise about his own personal case, had been oft assaulted anent that great foundation of truth, if there was a God, which cost him many dayes, and nights wrestling, and when he hath comed up to the pulpit, after being sometime silent, which was his usual way, he would have said *I think it is a great matter to believe there is a God*, telling the People, it was an other thing to believe that, then they judged. But it was also known, by his friends with whom he was familiar, what extraordinary confirmations he had from the Lord therein, what near familiarity he did attain in his secret converse with God, yea, truely some things I have had from persons worthy of credit thereanent, would seem so strange, and marvellous, that I forbear to set them down.

The great succesſe of his Ministry at Edenburgh, Innerneſſe, and other places whither providence called him is aboundantly known, whileſt he was confined at Innerneſſe that poor dark countrey was marvellously enlightned, many brought in to Christ by his Ministry, and a seed sown in these places, which even to this day is not wholly worn out. I shall here set down one passage of famous *Mr Henderſon* who at his first entry to the Ministry at Leuchars, was very prelatick, and by the Bishop of St Andrewes brought in againſt the parishes consent, so that the day

day of his admission, the Church doores being shut by the People, they were forced to break in by a windowe to get him entrance, but a little after this, upon the report of a Communion where *Mr Bruce* was to help, he would needs from a longing he had to hear and see such a man, go secretly there, and placed himselfe in a dark part of the Church where he might not be knowen, when *Mr Bruce* was come to the pulpit he did for a considerable time keep silence as his maner was, which did some way astonish *Mr Henderson*, but much more when he heard the first words wherewith he begun, which were these, *He that cometh not in by the door, but climbeth up another way, the same is a theif and a robber*; Which did by the Lords blessing at the very present take him by the heart, and had so great an impression on him, that it was the first mean of his conversion.

He was one that had the spirit of discerning in a great measure, did prophetically speak of many things which afterwards came to passe, yea, which I had attested by sober, and grave Christians, who were familiar with him, that divers persons distracted, and of these who were passed all hope of recovery in the falling sicknes, were brought to *Mr Bruce* and after prayer by him in their behalfe were fully recovered: this indeed may seem strange, but it is also true, *Mr Bruce* was a great wrestler who had more then ordinary familiarity with his Master.

A little before his death when he was at Edenbrugh and through weaknes kept his chamber, there was a meeting of divers godly Ministers at that time there, on some special ground of the Churches concernment, who hearing he was in the town came together, and gave him an account of the actings of these times, the Prelats then designing the service book,

book, after which *Mr Bruce* prayed, and did therein tell over again to the Lord the very substance of their discourse, which was a sad representation of the case of the Church, at which time there was such an extraordinary motion on all present, so sensible a a downpowring of the Spirit, that they could hardly contain themselves, yea, which was most strange, even some unusual motion on these who were in other parts of the house, not knowing the cause at that very instant, one *Mr Weemes* of *Lothaker* being then occasionally present, when he went away, said, O how strange a man is this, for he knocked down the Spirit of God on us all, this he said because *Mr Bruce* did divers times knock with his fingers on the table; I had this from a worthy Christian Gentleman in whose mothers house this was.

He was deeply affected with the naughtines and prophanity of many Ministers then in the Church, and the unsuitable carriage of others to so great a calling, and did expresse much his fear that the ministry of Scotland would prove the greatest persecutors of the Gospel that it had. If there were a full collection of these remarkable passages, which have been known to others in his life, it would further witnes what an extraordinary man that was. I shall only shut this up with learned Didoclavius his testimony in his Preface to his *Altare Damascenum*, Robertus Brusius, *Vir genere & virtute nobilis, majestate vultus venerabilis, qui plura animarum millia Christo lucrifecit, cujus anima, si ullius mortalium, absit verbo invidia, sedet in cœlestibus, anima mea, cum anima tua, Brusi, si ex aliena fide esset pendendum.*

III. *Mr Davidsone*, Minister of the Gospel at Salt-Prestoun, may be truly here instanced as one of

of an extraordinary prophetick Spirit, who was likewise eminently zealous, and faithful for his Master in a time of the Churches defection, as Didoclavius in that forementioned preface termes him; *Cato et constans Cato sui temporis.* He did then foresee Prelacies breaking in upon the Church, when King James was pressing the setting up of superintendents under a very specious pretext, and was for that end himself present at the assembly in Dundee, having engadged many, alace too many to consent thereto, but *Mr Davidsone* with great boldnes rose up, and warned the assembly of the hazard, and told them he saw the knave Bishop, with his mitre comming in under that mask, yea, did solemnly in his own name, and name of the Church of Scotland enter a protestation against that step of defection, and their yeelding up in so far the liberties of the Church to please men.

Whileſt he was Minister at Salt-Prestoun the building of a Church was by him much endevoured, which he did advance much out of his own privat interest, my Lord Newbatle who then had a great interest in the Parish engadging to help it fordward; from which he after resiled, and thereby frustrated the work. Whereupon *Mr Davidsone* told him, these walls that were then begun to be builded, should stand as a witnes against him, and that ere long God should root out him, & his estate out of that Parish, & he should not have a piece of land in the same, which shortly after had a visible accomplishment. It was very clear from many passages of his life that the secret of the Lord was in an extraordinary way with him. Some of these which have been transmitted from them who particularly knew the same are indeed most worthy of a remark.

At a certain assembly of the Church *Mr Iohn Spotswood*, and *Mr Iames Law* who were then entred into the ministry, were processed for some grosse acts of prophanity, where *Mr Davidson* finding the assembly too easy to passe the same in regard of their parts, and gifts, onely with a rebuke, he did with much vehemency presse their deposition, and after being crossed therein, said, you will needs spare these two men, whereat I am grieved, but the time is coming when they shall trample upon your necks and upon the Church of Scotland. And it is well knowen what an accomplishment this prediction had.

Being with *Mr Bruce* one time at dinner who was then in great favour with the King, he had these words in giving thanks after meat. *Lord, thy servant here is now a great favorite of the Court, and in much respect, but he shall be within a litle as much persecuted as he is now in favour, and go down the streets, when many who have him this day in esteem will not give him a salutaion*, which was very manifest afterwards. And at an other time whilest *Mr Robert Bruce*, and he were dyning together in the house of one of the Magistrates of the town, who was then a cordial friend to godly Ministers, he did also in his plain, and free way break forth with these words, whileſt he was giving thanks, *Lord, this good man hath respect for thy sake to thy servants, but he litle knoweth that in a short time he must carry us both who are here to prison*, which words did much trouble that honest man, though afterwards it came most exactly to passe.

There is one more remarkable passage which I should fear to set down, it is so strange, but that I had the same confirmed by some worthy of credit, who shewed me, that from these that were present, and

and familiar with Mr *Davidſone* they had it related. A Gentleman nearly related to a great family of that Parish, but a moſt violent hater of piety, did upon that account beat a poor honeſt man who lived there, having not the leaſt ſhadow of a provocation, and amongſt other ſore ſtrokes gave one upon the back with theſe words, *take this for Mr Davidſons ſake*, after which the honeſt man was for a time forced to keep his bed, and complained moſt of that ſtroke which he gave him on the back, as that which he felt more then all the reſt; but the Sabbath following, *Mr Davidſon* ſpeaking in the cloſe of his Sermon anent the oppreſſion of the godly, and enmity which wicked men had to ſuch, did very particularly touch that late inſtance, ſaying. *it was a ſad time, a prophane man would thus openly adventure to vent his rage againſt theſe who were ſeekers of God in the place, whileſt he could have no cauſe but the very appearance of his image*; and with great authority ſaid, *he who hath done this, were he the Laird, or the Lairds brother, ere a few dayes paſſe, God ſhall give him a ſtroke that all the Monarches of the earth dare not challenge*, which was then publickly known how in the cloſe of that very week, ſtanding before his doore, he was ſtruck dead with a thunder bolt and all his bones crusht.

A little before the death of this great Servant of Chriſt having an occaſional rencounter with Mr *Iohn Ker* a young Gentleman who was lately come from France, and had then no thoughts of the miniſtry, but was in a very courtly dreſſe, Mr *Davidſon* did in a ſolemn way charge him to caſt off his ſcarlet cloak, and lay aſide his guilded rapper, and take him to his book, *for you are the man*, ſayes he, *who is to ſucceed me in the miniſtry at this place*, which ſo very aſtoniſhing to that Gentleman for the preſent, yet accor-

dingly fell out, he did immediatly succeed him there, where he was for many yeares an holy and faithfull Minister of the Gospel. This last passage many yet alive who had the same from the said Mr *Iohn Ker* can witnes.

IV. Mr *Patrick Simson* who was once Minister of Cramond, and after transported to Stirling may be here also instanced, as a very extraordinary man in the Church, in his youth he attained to great knowledge in the languages, did much study Greek and Latine Authors, and gave this reason to such who wondred he should spend so much time in reading these who were but pagans, that he purposed to dedicat all these jewels which he borrowed from the Egyptians, to the building of the house of the Lord, it is knowen with what zeal he did oppose himselfe to the corruptions of that time, in the year 1584, whileft there was an expresse charge from the King, for acknowledging Mr *Patrick Adamson* Archbishop of S. Andrewes, or else lose their maintenance, he did with great vehemency appear against the same, though that man was his uncle upon the mothers side, and some who seemed willing to subscribe thereto with such a condition, *according to the Word of God*, he did gravely rebuke, shewing them it could be no salvo to their conscience, since it was *repugnantia in adjecto*, to subscribe to any humane institution according to the word, when the word did expresly condemn the same. It was also known, he refused the offer of a Bishoprick, and afterwards of a yearly pension from the King, which he looked on as a design only to bribe his conscience, which was more dear to him then all the World; and when that assembly at Aberdeen was condemned by the State, he did openly own, and avow the same, and in a very solemn manner

manner denounced the wrath, and judgment of God againſt theſe accuſers, and convicters of theſe excellent men, at Linlithgow, who ſtood for the liberty of that aſſembly; that notable paper, and proteſtation given in to the Parliament 1606 (where Prelacy was further eſtabliſhed) was by him penned, and out of his own hand given to the Earle of Dumbar, ſubſcribed by many Miniſters of the Church who were then there on that account.

His life was moſt exemplary for piety, and faithfulnes in ſerving his Maſter, which did preach no leſſe to that part of the countrey wherein he lived then his doctrine, one very remarkable paſſage of his life I do here adventure to ſet down, having very ſatisfying grounds as to the certainty of it, from theſe who knew the ſame, and had a particular relation of all its circumſtances from a grave Chriſtian who had it out of his own mouth, and likewiſe hath it written under old Mr *Row* of *Carnocks* hand, who was his familiar intimat friend; it is this. *His Wife Martha Barron* a gracious woman, the wife of his youth with whom he had lived in great love, fell ſick, which proved her laſt ſicknes, where she was firſt ſore aſſaulted by the Devil, who preſſed in upon her that she should be given over to his hand. and after it did reſolve in a viſible diſtraction which for a time grew upon her, ſo that moſt unlike to her former way, she would have broke forth with dreadfull and horrid expreſſions, it did moſt appear on a Sabbath morning whileſt Mr *Simpſon* was going to preach, and vvhileſt for a time he vvas forced vvith a heavy countenance to ſtand ſilent, he at laſt kneeled dovvn, and prayed, which shedid no wayes regard, but a little after he turning to the company that were

preſent, told them he was ſure that theſe vvho novv vvere vvitneſſes of that ſad houre, ſhould yet ſee a gracious vvork of God on this his Servant, and that the Devils malice againſt that poor vvoman, ſhould have a ſhameful foil; her diſtraction did ſtill continue until the Tueſday vvhich vvas the 9 of Auguſt, which morning at the very dawning of it, he goeth to his garden, and ſhut the doore behinde him, where for many houres he was alone, but a godly woman who that night was with his wife, *Helen Garner* wife to one of the Bailyes of Stirling, being apprehenſive of his hazard, through his grief, and faſting, could have no reſt till ſhe knew his caſe, and by ſome help climbed up, & wan in to the garden, but on a neer approach to that place, where Mr *Simpſon* then was ſhe was terified with an extraordinarie noiſe which through fear made her fall to the ground, it ſeemed, as ſhe related after to others, it was like the noiſe of a great rushing of multitudes together, and therewith ſuch a melodious ſound, as did make her know it was ſomething more then humane, and turned to prayer entreating the Lord would pardon her rashnes, which affection to his Servant who had been the inſtrument of her good, had carried her to; and after going forward finds him lying upon the ground, it was with much entreaty that he did then reveal himſelfe in that particular, until ſhe promiſed cloſſenes, not to ſpeak it to others ſo long as he lived, but had his allowance if ſhe ſhould ſurvive him, which promiſe ſhe kept, bnt after his death, did relate it to theſe from whom I have had this, he ſaid, *O what am I being duſt and aſhes that the holy Miniſtring ſpirits ſhould be ſent by the Lord to deliver a meſſage to me*, and shewed he had a viſion of Angels, who did with an audible voice give him an anſwer from the Lord of his

his wifes condition, and coming over to his houſe, he ſaid to all who were preſent, be of good comfort for ere ten houres of this day I am ſure that brand ſhall be plucked out of the fire, after which he went to prayer at his wifes bedſide, where for a time she lay quiet, but whileſt he mentioned Iacobs wreſtling in prayer, she ſits ſtraight up in the bed, caſting aſide the courtain, and ſayeth, *thou art this day Jacob, who haſt wreſtled, and alſo prevailed, and now God hath made good his words, which he ſpake this morning to you, for I am plucked out of the hands of Satan, and he ſhall have no power over me.* Which interruption made him for a ſpace ſilent, but after vvith great melting of heart proceeded in prayer, and magnified the riches of Gods love tovvards him; and after prayer there vvas ſvveet, and Chriſtian embracements betvvixt them, yea, from that houre she did ſpeak moſt Chriſtianly, and comfortably even to her death, vvhich vvas on the Friday followving Auguſt 13. 1601, vvhoſe laſt vvords in the moment of her departure vvere vvith a loud voice, *Come Lord, in thy hands I commend my ſpirit.*

After this Mr *Simpſon* lived ſeveral yeares fervent, & faithful in the work of the Lord, and one who in privat walk witneſſed ſuch mortification, that all who knew him might clearly ſee, his converſe was little in th World, in *March* 1618. he ſayd now ſhall this moneth put an end to all theſe things, and accordingly towards the cloſe of it vvas removed by death, at vvhich time he expreſſed much joy, bleſſing the Lord for his kindnes, that he had not been perverted by the ſinful courſes of theſe time, and might ſay as the Lord fed Elijah in the vvildernes, ſo in ſome reſpect he had dealt vvith him all his life time, and having theſe vvords upon ſome of his bookes vvritten, *Remember O my ſoul, and never forget the 9 of Au-*

guſt, *what conſolation the Lord gave thee, and how he performed what he ſpake, according to Zach. 3: ver. 2. is not this a brand plucked out of the fire*, upon vvhich ſome of his friends ſpeaking to him anent the ſame, his anſvver vvas, *Abſit mihi gloriari in aliquo, niſi in Domino Deo meo.*

Novv beſides theſe great men, many others vvho at that time did shine as lights in the Church may be here alſo mentioned, vvho vvere indeed ſtars of the firſt magnitude, eminently zealous, and faithful, & their Miniſtry followved vvith much of the power and authority of God, ſuch as Mr *Andrew Melvine*, of vvhom it might be ſaid, he had the face of a lion in his maſters cauſe, and feared not to ſpeak before Princes and great men, vvhen the truth called for it; likevviſe his nevoy Mr *Iames Melvin* that holy grave, and prudent Servant of Chriſt, *Mr Andrew Dunkan*, *Mr Iohn Scrimger*, *Mr Charles Ferme*, *Mr Iames Balfure*, *&c.* One paſſage I ſhall here ſet dovvn vvorthy of a remark of *Mr Andrew Melvine* who being priſoner in the Tovver, a Gentleman of his acquaintance, got acceſſe to viſit him, but found him in a ſad, deep muſe, anent the defection of many Miniſters in Scotland, and did deplore the ſtate of the Church there, having lately got an account of their vvay at that aſſembly at Glaſgovv 1610. vvhere the Earle of Dumbar had been active to corrupt divers vvith money: this Gentleman, deſiring to knovv vvhat vvord he had for his ovvn countrey got no anſvver, but upon a ſecond enquiry, he ſaid, I *have no word to ſend, but am heavily grieved, that the glorious governement of the Church of Scotland ſhould be ſo defaced, and a Popiſh tyrannical government ſet up, and thou Mandrſton* (for out of that houſe Dumbar vvas come, and he thus ſtiled him) *Haſt thou no other thing*

to

to do but carry down to Scotland such commissions whereby the poore Church there is wracked; the Lord shall be avenged upon thee and thou shalt never again go down for all thy grandour; which words took such impression on that Gentleman that when he went forth he desired some friends, who then waited to get a business at court exped by Dumbars moyen, that they would in time, put their affaires to a close, for he was perswaded, the words of that servant of Christ should not fall to the ground; and truely this did very quickly take place, that Earle being suddenly struck by death, within a few moneths after, and thus thrown down from the top of his grandour, whilest he was busie, perfecting that great house of his at Berwick, and had appointed a sumptuous feast for his daughters marriage, even then did his thoughts perish.

I shall here but adde one instance more of one whom we before named, though not a Minister, yet a great instrument for promoting the work of the Gospel in the place he lived, and on we may say, of an extraordinary spirit, *Hew Kennedy* provest of Aire, of whom I would mention these two passages from sure knowledge, One was whilest the Merchant Ships of that town were at sea, amongst whom his son Iohn, who was also a choise Christian, was at that time, he did one night rise before the breaking of day, and came to the house of his familiar friend *Iohn steward*, desiring he would rise, and go along with him to some room; whereat the said Iohn being exceedingly astonished, he sayeth to him; *it is no time to linger, let us go pray, for my son with the rest of our friends now at sea are at this houre on the very nick of perishing*, and after they had spent some time in prayer,

he aroſe chearfully, and ſaid *now they are ſafe*. Within a little after *Iohn ſteward* vvho had vvrit this down, with the day, and houre, at the return of the Ships, did moſt particularly enquire, and found hovv it did anſwer in all the circumſtances, and in that very houre of that night, they were to appearance paſt hope of ſaftey upon a very dangerous place, and by an extraordinary unxpected providence then delivered.

The other is this, one day being for many houres alone in prayer, vvhileſt ſome of his Chriſtian friends did vvait long for him, at laſt, vvith an unuſual chearfulnes, he came forth, and upon their enquiry anent his ſtay, he told them, it vvas no vvonder, for he had that day got mercy to him, & all his, & truely it vvas very evident, that not one of his Children, but there vvas large ground of charity that they vvere truely godly.

Whileſt he vvas dying Mr *Ferguſon* a godly Miniſter, ſayeth to him, you have cauſe, Sir, to be aſſured that the Angels of God are novv vvaiting at the ſtoups of this bed to convoy your ſoul into Abrahams boſome, to vvhom his anſvver vvas; *I am ſure thereof, and if the wals of this houſe could ſpeak, they could tell how many ſweet dayes I have had in ſecret fellowſhip with God, and how familiar he hath been with my ſoul.* I ſhall only adde Mr *Welshes* teſtimony in a letter from France to this great man, his vvords vvere theſe, *Happy is that city, yea, happy is that Nation that hath a New Kennedy in it, I have my ſelfe certainly found the anſwers of his prayers from the Lord in my behalfe.*

(¶) I. Reader, beſids theſe more remarkable paſſages which in the peruſeall of this treatiſe thou wilt finde dropped apart, concerning the way of God with ſome

ſome of his more eminently faithful Servants, I have in this place caſt together ſome few inſtances which in the former impreſſion were not hinted.

In the firſt place thou mayeſt take notice of theſe two concerning that walker with God great Maſter *Bruce*, of whom ſome things have been ſpoken elſewhere, & firſt beſide that bleſſed frame of ſpirit which appeared in the whole of his converſe, he endeavoured more eſpecially, whenſoever he was to appeare in publick as an Ambaſſadour of Jeſus Chriſt, to have his Spirit deeply impreſſed with the Majeſty of that God of whom he was to ſpeak, and of the high import it was to the ſouls of men to have the myſteries of ſalvation unfolded unto them not with entiſing words of mans wiſdome but in demonſtration of the ſpirit and power, without which this preached Goſpel though in it ſelf the word of life will never prove the power of God to ſalvation: And therefore though he was known to take much pains on ſearching the Scripture, that he might know the minde of the Spirit of God by comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, and in preparing appoſit matter for the edification of his hearers, which he durſt not neglect, and wherein he durſt not be overly as knowing he was to ſpeake of God, and affraid of the curſe threatned for doing his work negligently; yet this was the leaſt part of his preparation - work, the maine of his buſineſſe lay in having his ſoul wrought up to ſome ſutableneſſe of frame for preaching the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and making manifeſt the myſtery of the Goſpel as he ought, that ſo his Maſter by his ſervice might ſee of the travel of his ſoul and be ſatisfied. And knowing that the ſucceſſe of preaching depended wholly upon the preſence of God accompanying the diſpenſing of Ordinances, his manner was

to

to be much in prayer and ſupplication in privat before his publick appearances, powring forth his heart before God, and wreſtling with him not ſo much for aſſiſtance to the meſſenger as to the meſſage. One inſtance vvhereof take as follovveth: Being to preach at a ſolemne occaſion he vvas long in coming to the congregation, ſome of the people beginning to vveary and others vvondering at his ſtay the bels being long rung, and the time far ſpent, the Beddal vvas deſired to go ſee vvhat the matter mean't. vvho coming to his houſe and finding his chamber door ſhut, and hearing a ſound drevv neer and liſtening overheard *Mr Bruce* often vvith wuch ſeriouſneſſe ſay, *I proteſt I will not go, except thou go with me.* Whereupon the man ſuppoſing that ſome perſon had been vvith him vvithdrevv vvithout knocking at the door, vvho being asked at his returne by a Gentleman the cauſe of his delay anſvvered, he could not tell but I ſuppoſe ſaid he there is ſome vvith *Mr Bruce* vvho is unwilling to come to Church, and he is ſo preſſing and peremptory to have them come alongs that I overheard him proteſt moſt ſeriouſly he would not go if they went not with him. However a little after *Mr Bruce* came accompanyed with no man, but he came in the fulneſſe of the bleſſing of the Goſpel of Chriſt, and his ſpeech and his preaching was in ſuch evidence and demonſtration of the Spirit, that by the ſhining of his face and that showre of divine influence, wherewith the word ſpoken was accompanyed, it was eaſy for the hearer to perceive that he had been in the mount with God, and that he had indeed brought that God whom he had met with in privat into his mothers houſe and into the chambers of her that conceived him. Nay he preached ordinarily with ſo much life and power, and the word ſpoken by him

vvas

was accompanyed with ſuch a manifeſt preſence, that it vvas evident to the hearers he vvas not alone at the vvork, but that in his ſtrivings to perſuade the things vvhich did belong to the Kingdome of God and to preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus he laboured thereunto ſtriving according to his vvorking vvhich vvrought in him mightily: For though he vvas no Boanerges as to his voice being of a ſlovv & grave delivery, yet he ſpoke vvith ſo much authority and vveight (as becomes the Oracles of God) that ſome of the moſt ſtouthearted of his hearers vvere ordinarily made to tremble; and by having theſe doors which formerly had been bolted againſt Jeſus Chriſt as by an irreſiſtible povver broke open, and the ſecrets of their heart made manifeſt, they vvent avvay under convictions, and carrying vvith them undenyable proofs of Chriſts ſpeaking in him and that God vvas vvith him of a truth.

The other paſſage vvhich I preſent thee vvith is concerning his death. Being now aged and through infirmity of body confined to his chamber where he vvas frequently viſited by his friends (to vvhom a converſation in Heaven and the aboundant grace of God in him had indeared him) and being asked by one of them hovv matters novv ſtood betvvixt God and his ſoul, he (vvith that ſeverity of ſoul vvhich is the effect of the love of God shed abroad in the heart and that plerophory under vvhich ſuch vvalkers vvith God and vvorkers of righteouſneſſe as he vvas are frequently taken off the ſtage) made this returne, *When I was a young man*, ſaid he, *I was diligent and lived by faith in the Son of God, but now I am old and am not able to do ſo much, yet he condeſcends to feed me with lumps of ſenſe.*

And that morning before the Lord removed him (his

(his sickneſſe then being moſtly a vveakneſſe through age) he came to break faſt at his table; and having as he uſed eaten one ſingle egge, he ſaid to his daughter, I think I am yet hungry ye may bring me another egge, but inſtantly thereafter falling into a deep meditation and after having muſed a vvhile; he ſaid, *Hold daughter hold, my Maſter calls me*, vvith theſe vvords his ſight failed him, vvhereupon he called for the Bible; but finding his ſight gone he ſaid, caſt up to me the eight Chapter to the Romans, and ſet my finger on theſe vvords, *I am perſwaded that neither death nor life, &c. ſhall be able to ſeparate me from the love of God which is in Chriſt Ieſus my Lord.* Novv, ſaid he, is my finger upon them, vvhen they told him it vvas, vvithout any more he ſaid, *Now God be with you my children, I have breakefaſted with you and ſhall ſup with my Lord Ieſus Chriſt this night:* And ſo gave up the Ghoſt, death ſhutting his eyes that he might ſee God. Thus that valiant Champion for the truth, vvho in his appearing to plead for the Crovvne and intereſt of Jeſus Chriſt knevv not vvhat it vvas to be daunted by the face and frovvnes of the higheſt and moſt incenſed adverſaries, vvas by his Maſter taken off the field as more then a conquerour, and as the revvard of much faithful diligence about the ſouls of others, and much pains and ſerioufneſſe about making his ovvne calling and election ſure, had an enterance miniſtred unto him aboundantly into the everlaſting Kingdom of his Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

II. In the next place, Reader, I ſhall, in proſecution of my deſigne which is thy edification, hint to thee ſome things concerning that burning and ſhining Light *Mr Iohn Welſh*, whoſe name is ſo famous and favory for the great things which God did by him & for

for him, that I should much disappoint thy expectation if making mention of him, I should not acquaint thee with some thing rare & extraordinary; & therefore though it be beside my designe to give thee the full history of his or the rest of these great mens lives, yet that I may not altogether frustrat thy expectation take these few remarkable passages which follow. As first, an eminently holy Minister yet alive and deservedly of esteem in the Church of Christ told me from certaine knowledge, that two men coming with packs of cloath to the toune of Air from a neighbouring place, &c. where there was yet no suspicion that the Lord's hand had smitten it with the plague, which was then sore in the land, The sentry at the bridge held them out, notwithstanding they had a passe, till the Magistrate came; who though he could not disprove their passe, yet would not permit them to enter the towne, till he sent for *Mr Welsh*: So the Baylie bids them disburden their beasts, tell he considered what was to be done, a little after *Mr Welsh* coming, the Magistrate sayes to him, Sir, here are men come from such a place, we have heard of no plague there; besides, they have a passe from known men, what shall we do? *Mr Welsh* made no answer but uncovering his head, stood in the midst of the company which then followed him, and having his eyes directed to Heaven (yet speaking nothing) neer half a quarter of an houre, at last said, *Bayly*, Cause these men put on their packs again & be gone, for if God be in Heaven, the plague of God is in these packs. These men returned and opened their packs in Cumnock, and it was observed that such contagion was therein that all in that village dyed, there was not a man left to bury the dead.

He was famous in his generation for the power he had

had in prevailing with God by prayer and ſupplication, whereof take theſe following inſtances amongſt the many vvhich might be given.

One is, that being on a certain night under an extraordinary preſſure of ſpirit to go and poure forth his heart to God, he left his vvife in bed, and going out to a garden ſpent moſt of the night in that exerciſe, (a thing ſo ordinary to him that he uſed to ſay, he vvondered how a Chriſtian could ly a bed all night vvithout riſing to ſpend ſome of the night in prayer and praiſe,) but his vvife vveary, at laſt vvent to ſeek for him, but miſſing him in his ordinary place, vvent into other gardens, by ſuch paſſages as she knevv, at laſt she heard a voice, and dravving near to it, could hear him ſpeak a fevv vvords, but vvith great force and fervency, mixed and accompanied vvith floudes of teares, vvhich vvere theſe, *O God, wilt thou not give me Scotland! O God, wilt thou not give me Scotland!* She being weary and afraid to interrupt him, went home, and heard not the cloſe. At laſt he came home, and re-entring his bed, his wife began to reprove his unmercifulneſſe to his own body, then asked him, what it was he was ſaying; for she told she heard him. Well, ſaid he, you had better have been in your bed, but ſince ye heard, I tell you, I have indured a great fight for Scotland this night, and hardly could I get a remnant reſerved, yet he will be gracious.

* After this he aroſe another night, but went not out of doores, but in a chamber he travelled and groaned ſo, as his wife impatient did riſe ſeveral times, calling him to bed; but he waited his time, and when he came she began a modeſt expoſtulation with him for tarrying: *Hold thy peace*, ſaid he, *it will be well with us, but I ſhall never preach another preaching*

in

in Aire: And having fallen asleep, before he awaked the messenger was come who by command carried him prisoner to the Castle of Edinburgh.

When he was prisoner in the Castle of Edinburgh, the Lord *Uchiltree* was Captain, whose sister was *Mr Welsh* his mother in law being *John Knox's* wife: Yet being much taken up in King James his Court, he took not time to be so comfortable to his cusin *Welsh* as he should: But being convinced of his own unkindnesse he caused *Mr Welsh* suppe with him one night in the Castle, where were also several other Gentlemen, and amongst them a Popish youth, sate toward the lower end of the table, *Mr Welsh* being by the Captaine set at the upper end intertained the company with grave & edifying discourse which all delighted to hear, save this young Papist who with laughter and derision laboured to silence him, which was little reguarded by *Mr Welsh*. But after supper while the guests sate a little, this youth stood up at the lower end of the table, and while *Mr Welsh* proceeded from grave to gracious entertainment of his company, the youth came to that height of insolence as with the finger to point at him and with the face to make flouting grimaces, whereby he grieved the holy Man, so as on a suddain he was forced to a silence.

The whole company who had heard him with delight were silent with him: Within a little *Mr Welsh* as moved by the Spirit of God, broke forth into these words: *Gentlemen, the Spirit of God is provoked against us, and I shall intreat you not to be afraid to see what God shall do among you before you rise from the table, for he will smite some one of you with death before you go hence.* All were silently astonished, waiting to see the issue with fear. And while every man feared himselfe, except the insolent youth, he fel down

dead suddenly at the foot of the table to shew the power of Gods jealousie against the mockers of his Spirit and the offers of his grace. This History, with variation of some circumstances, is set down before Page 425.

One day while *Mr Welsh* looked out at his chamber window in the Castle, he happened to see the Captain, and called unto him, saying, God save you my Lord: The Captain acknowledging his neglect and asking for *Mr Welsh* his welfare desired to know how he might serve him. *In nothing*, said *Mr Welsh*, *if you be well, except you would carry my petition to his Majesty intreating for liberty to preach the Gospel.* I willingly will, said the Captain, therefore send it to me. Nay, said *Mr Welsh*, I am your Kinsman, I love you so well as to warn you not to take it in charge, except you resolve to deal truely in delivering it and in getting me an answer. I shall bear the blame, said the Captain, if I do it not, I beseech you, my Lord, said the other, undertake not unlesse you mind to do it, for the hazard is great. Well, *Uchiltry* takes it, but not coming in an opportune season (for he came when the King was passionatly moved on another occasion) he thought not fit then to give it, and as at that time he deferred, so thereafter he neglected, and at last quit forgot to deliver it at all. For which his heart smiting him he durst hardly be seen of *Mr Welsh* for three moneths. Yet conscience forgetting as well as he, he came to the same place where *Mr Welsh* at first called him: And now *Mr Welsh* asked how he did and what was become of his petition? The Captain surprised answered, I delivered it to his Majesty, but he was in a passion, and it seemes it hath fallen by, for I have not gotten an answer. Nay my Lord, said

Mr

Mr Welsh, you should not lye to God and to me, I know you delivered it not, I am sory my Lord for your lot, I warned you not to be false to God, and now I tell you, God shall take your estate & honours in Scotland, and shall give them to your neighbour, and this in your own time. This troubled the Lord *Uchiltry*, and came truely to passe, for he being the eldest son of the good Lord *Uchiltry* a reformer, was forced in his own time to quite all and give both estate & honours to James, the son of Captain James, the second brother who was the last of that house.

III. Concerning Master *John Scrimger*, Minister at Kinghorn. There was a godly Woman under his charge called —— who fell sick of a very lingring sickness, and was all the while assaulted with strong temptations apprehending she was a cast away (yet had she not onely given ground for charity but her Christian conversation for a long time had put the reality of the grace of God in her beyond debat with the more discerning who knew her) *Mr Scrimger* often visited her, while in this deep exercise, conferred with her, prayed over her; but her trouble remained notwithstanding and the terrors of God still lodged with her. When she drew near her dissolution, she became worse both in body and spirit; and sent for *Mr Scrimger*, who at that time took two of his elders with him, and in their presence first endeavoured to comfort her by exhortation and conference, then he prayed, and seeing her the nearer her end seemingly the worse, he made some of the elders to pray, and again he himselfe prayed. But Satan still raged the more and her soul the more removed from peace. Then he sate in a muse a litle space and said, What's this? our laying before her grounds of comfort will

not do it, conference will not do it, prayer will not do it, we must use another remedy. Sure I am this is a Daughter of Abraham, sure I am, I am the the Elder, sure I am she hath sent for me. And therefore in name of God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who sent him to redeem sinners, in name of Jesus Christ who obeyed the Father, and came to save us, in name of the holy and blessed Spirit, our Quickner and Sanctifier, I the Elder command thee a Daughter of Abraham, to be loosed from these bonds. And immediatly peace and joy succeeded.

An example it is of God's power in that time to make our hair stand at the force of faith and boldnesse of Spirit; rather then to be imitated by such as wanting the ancient holynesse would rather have a Spirit for miracles them for salvation.

IV. I shall here insert some special & edifying remarks of the life of that great and worthy servant of Jesus Christ *Mr Robert Blair* (well knowen to this Church it being but a few years since his death) who was deservedly numbered among the first of these great and worthy instruments whom the Lord raised up amongst us for carrying on the late blessed reformation. Some of which I knew from himself (though from much humble modestly he too much in these things concealed himself, & shunned the setting down thereof under his own hand whereto he was much pressed) but the most of them I had from one of his special intimate friends and a grave and eminent Minister of this Church.

In his younger years it was known how much he outrun others in his studies, and gave these who knew him ground to hope what after was seen; the Lord

was

was pleased to call him by the Ministery of famous *Trochrig* in whose hand (these were his own words) did the Lord put the key that first opened his heart, upon his first coming forth to preach, he by a remarkable providence had *Master Bruce* whom you have formerly mentioned to be his hearer; and as I heard himself declare it was his desire to have the judgement of so great a man upon his discourse, whose censure he said he would never forget, it had been so much blessed. Which was this, *I found* saith he *your Sermon very polished and disgested* (which was indeed easie to one of his parts) *but there is one thing I did miss in it, to wit the Spirit of God I found not that.* This grave *Mr Blair* did often speak to others, which then took a deep impression upon himself, and helped him to see it was something els to be a minister of Jesus Christ then to be a knowing and eloquent preacher. He was for divers years Regent in the colledge of *Glasgow*, where he made it his work to train up these under his charge in the study of godliness aswel as of humane learning: but by reason of the prejudice of some who had power in that place he could not long stay. One passage whilest he was there, I did hear him relate: upon the report of some sinful oath to be pressed upon the Masters of the colledge, he inquired at a fellow Regent of his, *Mr Gawin forsyth* what he would do in that matter, whose answere was, *by my faith I must live*, to whom *Mr Blair* said, *Sir I will not swear by my faith as you do, but truely I intend to live by my faith, you may choise your own way; but I will adventure on the Lord*; that wretched man did continue to whom the matter of an oath was a smal thing after he was gone: but, which is worthy of a remark, many years after *Mr forsyth* fell in such poverty as forced his supplicating of the general assembly of the Church for some relieff, where

worthy *Mr Blair* was then made choise of to preside as Moderator, and upon his appearance in that deplorable case could not shune the observing of that former passage, and upon his adress to him in private put him in mind thereof, though with great tenderness, as he said, not in the least to upbraid him in his low condition, but to let him see he had been truely carried through by his faith at which he formerly had scofed.

After his being put from the colledge, he went to visite his brother then Minister at *Dumbarton*, and confessed that by the way he could not forbear singing from joy in the remembrance of Gods being with him, and helping him to be instrumental in the good of the youth who had been under his inspection; he went after to *Ireland* being trysted with a call from *Bangor*, and upon the sight of land his heart was so immediatly made to exult within him for joy, that as he said he could scarce beare the same. Whileſt he came near *Bangor* he had a strong impression borne in upon him that the Dean of *Bangor* was sick unto death and should rise no more, which at first he rejected as an unpertinent suggestion, but going further on his way, it was with such power impressed upon his spirit, as forced him to take notice of it; when he came to the place, he found the Dean was indeed lying sick, and though a most naughty man, made him not only welcome upon his visite, bnt incouraged him to hold on in his way, and told him he was to succed him in that charge; yea he spoke so unlike himself, and in a strain so different from what was usual unto him, that a Gentelwoman standing by said to some others, an Angel is speaking out of the Dean's bed to *Mr Blair*, thinking it could not be such a man.

He

He had been once troubled with an appearing of the Devil whileſt he was a Regent in the colledge, who like a crooked boy that waited on him ſtood up and laughed him in the face, whileſt he vvas ſerious in his chamber, and immediatly diſappeared: but after vvhileſt he vvas at *Bangor* there vvas one in that Parish vvho vvent to *Scotland* vvith horſes to ſell, and at a fair was tryſted with a man vvho at once vvas vvilling to buy them all; but pretending he had not all that money at preſent gave him bond until Mertimeſs the poor man having no ſuſpition, returnes; and near that time, going homevvard from *Bangor* one night, his Merchant meets him, vvho vvas the Devil; novv ſaid he, you knovv my bargain, hovv I bought you at ſuch a place, and I am come as I promiſed to pay you the price. Bought me, ſaid the other trembling, you bought but my horſes, nay ſayes the Devil I will let you know I bought your ſelf, and to the poor man confounded with fear ſaid, he muſt either kill ſome body, and the more excellent the perſon were the better it would be for him, elſe he would not free him, and particularly charged him to kill *Mr Blair*. The man overcome with terror, and through the violence of that temptation, determined the thing, and went to *Mr Blair's* houſe with a dagger in his right hand hid beneath his cloak, and though much confouuded was moving to get it out: but after *Mr Blair's* ſpeaking to him the poor man fell a trembling ſo extremly, that upon a further inquiry he freely declared for what end he was come, and told he had laboured to draw out his dagger, but it would not come from the ſcabbard, though he knew not what hindered it; for then when he eſſayed to draw it forth again it came out with much eaſe. *Maſter Blair* bleſſing the Lord exhorted him to choiſe him for

his refuge, he was after threatened and much terrifyed by the Devil but nothing more followed.

After some time in the Ministery at *Bangor*, he with others of his worthy bretheren was silenced by the Bishop, and as he told himself, was in the Church when the Bishop (one Eckline) did himself intimate the sentence, upon which *Mr Blair* rose up publickly in the congregation and with great Authority did cite the Bishop to appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ to answer for what he was doing contrary to his own light and conscience, against these whom he knew to be faithful Ministers of the gospel; whereupon the man vvas so astonished, that he immediatly cryed out, I appeal from the tribunal of the justice of God to the throne of his mercy, to whom *Mr Blair* replyes. Sir your appeal is rejected, for you know what you are doing is directly against your conscience, which hath made you bear witness to us as the servants of Jesus Christ. A fevv moneths after the Bishop fell sick, and the physitians inquiring about his case, he only could say my conscience, and so dyed.

Whileſt under restraint he was by his brethren sent to England to deal with the King for their liberty, when he was on the road he was taken with a mighty fit of the stone which made him lye upon his horse's neck not being able to hold up his back, which much disquieted him as being a probable let upon such an important business. And in this posture turned to the Lord in prayer, but immediatly after essaying if he could possibly lift up his back, he found to his astonishment, his tormenting pain quite gone, and perfect ease, nor did it recurre to him for two years after. A few dayes after in the same journey his horse fell very lame, which did in some measure trouble him having no convenient access to provide himself of

an

an other, and even upon this, did adreſs to the Lord by prayer that in ſuch a ſtrait he might be helped, which he graciouſly condeſcended to do, ſo that the horſe was to his amazement healed, and without the leaſt halt did carry him to *London*.

While ſt he was there he did eſſay what he could to accomplish his buſſineſs, but could have no acceſs to the King, yea ſome who were his friends at court after trial aſſured him he had no ground to hope in that matter; yet he reſolved to continow and roll the buſineſs over on the Lord, for whoſe ſervice he was only importuning an open door; and one day having gone to *Greenwitch*, where the court then was, being wearied with onwaiting without acceſs he retired into the park to pray, where after much wreſtling with the Lord, he was in a more then ordinary way brought near, and had ſo clear a return, that he could not withſtand the aſſurance he got that his way ſhould be ſucceſsfull, but the appearance thereof in an ordinary way being ſo ſmall preſſed him to adventure humbly the asking of of a ſigne from the Lord, and immediatly after there being a conſiderable wind that blew hard, and made a noiſe among the bulrushes that grew there, ſo great a calme did preſently follow that not the leaſt plant of the ground did any wayes move or ſtir, he went thence to London, and within a few dayes in a moſt ſtrange way had his petition preſented to the King and accepted; yea in St James's park was particularly called for, where the King with his own hand did not only ſigne it, but wrote theſe words in the margin which he directed to the Depute *indulge the education of theſe Miniſters for they are Scots men.*

When he was in England he had a ſtrange diſcovery of his wife (an excellent gentlewoman) her dying, and that she was lying in ſuch a bed, and a Chriſtian

friend of his particular acquaintance beside her, when he came home, he found his wife in health; but a little after fell sicke and died in that same bed with that friend sitting by her, and with all these particular circumstances. These are but a few of many great and remarkable passages in that excellent man's life who was himself as great an observer of providence as any in the age he lived in, and this he had notably verifyed in himself which was an usual saying of his to others *observable things do follow them who are given to observation.*

V. This seems an eminent instance of the providence of God, and worthy to be on record, that concerns the Laird of *Raith*, of a known, and ancient family in this countrey, who in the beginning of the reformation was a professed Papist; but the Lord directing that great servant of his *Mr Wishart* one night very late to his house, who, after some repulse from a servant, got access to this Gentleman, and told him he was come with the offer of the Gospel of Christ to him, and his family, if he would receive it, which was in that manner backed with the authority of God, and his power on that Gentlemans conscience, that he most kindly received *Mr Wishart*, and told him, his offer was welcome; and a little after, this visite was made so successful, upon *Mr Wishart's* instructing him and his family in the truth, that they publickly professed the same, and this worthy Gentleman evidenced his being truely taken by the heart; but sometime after, upon a snare laid for him by Cardinal *Beaton*, he was seased upon in the Laird of *Grange* his house, and thence carried prisoner to the castle of *Edenburgh*, and so hotly pursued by this wretched mans rage, who then was in his greatest power

wer, that in a short time he was sentenced to dye; his Lady's being overwhelmed with grief, upon her husband's suffering and the forfeiture of that estate, having five sons, besides some daughters, to provide, did move him; but as one then much with God he with much confidence told her having gotten this assurance from that God for whom he suffered concerning his house and posterity that she had no cause to be troubled: for as to her outward case she should yet live to see the youngest of her sons in a better condition then he had been himself, which most clearly fell out, and is well known to many in this time: his second son went to France, was there raised to great honour, and upon his returning home, purchased a considerable estate, and was made Lord *Melvin*, and which calls for a remark, bought a part of the Cardinal's estate, the then great instrument of the present ruine of his house, which continues to this day. His third son was Lord *Tongland*, as one of the judges of the *Session*, and an other of them Laird of *Halhill*, but, which was most strange, that the French King, (it seems moved from the great respect he had, to that worthy Gentleman *Sir Robert Melvin*, the second son formerly mentioned) did, upon some treaty with Scotland, press and procure the taking off the forfeture of that estate of Raith, whereby the eldest son was also restrored, and it is known to this day; in what a measure the Lord hath graciously witnessed his respect to that house and family which now is injoyed by my *Lo Melvin* who as he is by a continued succession the descent of that worthy Gentleman who thus suffered for the truth, so it is hoped he shall be found walking in the steps of his truely renowned Antcestors who walked with God and adhered to his truth while forsaken and persecuted.

VI.

VI. I shall mention amongst thir late instances a notable passage of an excellent man & deservedly of great repute in his time amongst the first restorers of the Gospel, and of learning in *France*, after the reformation, which grave and famous *Rivet* sets down in a letter of his to his brother, and is since his death printed in the French tongue; which relation I shall give to these who have not access to that book. It is this. *Iames Faber*, native of a steeple in Piccardy, a most faithful and eminent Minister of the Gospel there, did in the persecution of that time, flee with others, and for security retired to the Queen of *Navarre*, then in *Albret* in *Gascoine*, who had him in high esteem: on a certain day the Queen did advertise him, she purposed to come and dine at his house, and for that end did invite some learned men, in whose conference she took much delight: at dinner *Faber* became exceedingly sad, and now and then fell out in bitter weeping, at which the Queen complained, and inquiring the cause, why he weeped whilst she had come to be merry with him, he in the end said, most serene Queen, how can I be glad, or make others glad, who am as wicked a man as the earth bears. And what is that wickedness, sayes she, you have committed, who are known from your youth to have lived so holy? He answered I am now the age of an hundreth years, free from the touch of any woman, and remembers not that I have committed what would burthen my conscience, or make me affraid to leave the world, except one sin, for which I am assured propitiation is possible, and as she pressed him to tell it, whilst he could scarce speak for abundance of tears, He said how can I stand before the throne of God, who having taught others in purity and sincerity, the holy Evangel of the Son of God, many of whom having followed my doc

doctrine, have constantly suffered, a thousand torments and death it self, in the mean time I an unconstant Doctor, did flee; and though I had lived long enough, and should not have feared death, but rather desired it, did yet vvithdravv, and thus covvardly transgressed the command of my God. Whereupon the Queen, as she vvas most eloquent, did by reason and example shevv him vhis had befallen others of the holy servants of God, and others there also, did add such considerations as he became more chearful, and said there remanis nothing, but that I go from hence to God, and after I have now made my Testament, I have that impretion, I must delay no longer, knowing the Lord calls for me. After he fixed his eyes on the Queen, and sayes, Madam, I make you my heir and to your preacher *Gerard* I leave my Books; and my cloaths, and other things I have I leave to the poor; whereupon the Queen smiling, asked, what then *Mr Faber* shal I have? The care, sayd he, Madam, to distribute this to the poor; it is well, said she, I solemnly profess, this Legacie is more acceptable to me, then if the King my Brother, had named me his heir: thereafter they saw him more joyful, then he said, I have need of some rest, be you merry and joyful, and in the mean time adiew: and having spoke this, he turned him over on a bed that was near; where, as they judged, he lay sleeping, but was indeed fallen a sleep in the Lord, without the least signe of a previous indisposition, and when they were about to awake him, found him to their admiration dead; such was the end of this personage undoubitably holy, which the Queen of *Navarre* did her self relate to the Elector *Frederick* the second of *Palatine*, when he was sick at *Paris*, in his return from *Spain*, from the Emperour *Charles* the fyfth and it was communicated by

by a worthy Gentleman *Hubertus Thomas* a counseller of the said Fredericks who was present at this relation of the Queens, from whom *Rivet* had it written by himself.

VIII. I shall subjoine two passages worthy of observation, which concerne a grave and eminently godly Minister in the Church of Ireland Mr *Andrew Steward*, Minister at Dunagor, which together with some of these other remarkable instances here mentioned) were transmitted unto me from his worthy Son *Mr Andrew Steward*, Minister of Donachadee, who both knew the certainty of them, and was himself also a great observer of such confirmations of the truth; whom I cannot mention without sorrow at the remembrance of the late removeal of so eminent and useful a Minister of Jesus Christ.

The first is an instance and evidence of the power and prevalency of prayer with God, on a Monday after a communion where a great multitude being gathered and these of the choisest of that countrey, whilst as a shepherd he was feeding his flock in a large place (for the numerousnesse of the hearers imposed a necessity upon him to preach in the field) an horrid black cloud and fearful to look on hang'd directly over their head, which to all present threatned a strange powring down of rain, whereby the exercise would have been interrupted; yea some drops were begun to fall, but *Mr Steward* then at great advantage in his own spirit as to nearnesse with God begg'd their leave to retire a little from the place, and went to another part for prayer, and while he prayed it was observably seen, that the cloud did remove half a mile off on the South hand, and there fell down in such a mighty

mighty rain, that albeit it was the heat of Summer the brooks so swelled that some coming too late to sermon could not have passage over, but where they were gathered there was not one drop more, so that he went on with a full gail to the close of the work, to the no small advantage and conviction of his hearers.

The next concerns his death being called to the burial of that excellent man of God *Mr Iosiah Welsh*, Son of that great man formerly mentioned who was his neigbbour Minister, he stood sometime at the grave as a sad observer of such a thing, and to some who were by said, *Who knows who will be next?* But none answering, he said to them, I know, and thus turned away, and went home to *Dunagor* on his foot, and entering into the Church did bolt the doors, where he tarryed some two hours, and after going to his house he fell a sleep on his bed with an excess of grief, whence he never in health rose again, but was buried that day moneth. When his Wife returned whom he had left with *Mr Welsh's* Widow, she inquired what he had been doing, to whom he said, I have been taking my leave of the Church of *Dunagor*, and I was there taking timber and stones to witness that in my short time I had laboured to be faithful and that according to my light, I have revealed the whole counsel of God to the People, (how great a testimony of the conscience was this) after a fourteen nights lying *Mr Ridge* a choise English Minister there came to visite him, and said, I hope Sir you do not now rew that ye have been faithful, he answered, I rew nothing but that I was too long in beginning (he mean'd his resisting, for several years, a call to the ministery, to which he had been much pressed) and I will tel you a strange

thing

thing vvhich hath helped me to be faithful, theſe laſt ſeven years there hath not one day paſſed me, vvithout thoughts of death, and renevved ſubmiſſion to it, yea this made me neglect my body vvhich ſhould have ſerved the Lord, as if it hath been mire in the ſtreet, vvhich novv troubleth me. That night vvhen he dyed ſeveral godly and grave Chriſtians vvere vvith him vvhere for a long time he fell in a deep ſilence, vvhich ended vvith heavy groanings often reiterated, at laſt a Chriſtian there deſired to knovv vvhat troubled him, but he refuſed to tell, at laſt being urged he ſaid. I ſhall tell you, my hair ſtands to behold, vvhat I ſee coming on thir Lands (this vvas in the Year 1634..) and being further preſſed he ſaid, *the bloody* wars of Germany ſhall never be ballanced with the wars of theſe three Kingdoms; What do you ſpeak Sir, ſaid one of the company, to whom he anſwered, *The dead bodyes of many thouſands who this day deſpiſe the glorious Goſpel ſhal ly upon the earth as dung unburied*, and whilſt asked what then ſhall become of us and our poſterity? He lifted up his voice, & ſaid, *He that is for the ſword to the ſword, he that is for captivity to captivity, and he that is for famine to famine, and God ſhall be avenged on theſe Lands*, And whilſt one ſaid, Is there no remedy? He cryed thrice, *No remedy, no remedy, no remedy*; then he held his peace a little, and ſaid; I tell you what muſt be, *The broken Covenant of* Scotland *muſt be renewed*, *the Formality of* Ireland *muſt be purged*, *the prodigality of* England *removed, and the ſons of Saul muſt be hung up before the ſun*. By which laſt word none knew what he mean'd. Some of his own Parish being preſent asked what he would ſay to them, to whom he replyed, *Woe to thee* Dunagor *for the netles & the long graſs ſhall be in greater plenty in thee then ever were people to hear the Word of God*, this

the

the forementioned relater said, he was a witness to three years together after the late rebellion, they asked if he would have his children, he said no, he had done with them, and whilst they mentioned one of his daughters he desired to be foreborn, and said, she should see glorious dayes after all this, & then takes his wife by the hand, (who having but a fourth night lyen in of child, crept out of the bed to get & give a long fairwell, to whom he said, Thou hast in faithfulness suffered many things with me in my pilgrimage, and now wherewith shall I comfort thee my love (think that he left her with four children, much debt contracted whilst he resisted a call to the ministery, and but 30 Shilling Sterling then to do all with) *a father to the fatherless, a judge to the widow is God in his holy habitation*, as God is God thou shalt nevet want nor none of thine, but in all the sad dayes that are coming you shall be a wonder of mercy in every place, whither you are carryed, and not a haire of your head shall fall, which was to the conviction and edification of many fully accomplished, which the forementioned relator does himself also attest, though with much humble modesty, because of his nea rrelation.

VIII. This passage also I must instance of a remarkable providence to a grave and to this day famous Christian in our countrey *Iohn stewart* provost of *Aire*, who from his very young years did witness a respect to godliness, he had a considerable estate left him by his Father, but having so great a weight and impression on his spirit of the distress and straitened condition of many good people whom he knew in the countrey, and love to Jesus Christ, and his truth, having got the command over him, and all his interest, he did

deliberatly call them, as he had aceeſs, together in *Edinburgh*, and having ſpent ſome time in prayer, took their ſolemn promiſe, not to reveal while he lived, what he was to do; he ſaid, he knew in what ſtraits many of them were, to hold up the credite of the profeſſion, and therefore he had brought a little money to lend each of them; yet ſo as they should never offer to repay it till he required the ſame, this was not known until his death, that ſome of theſe found themſelves obliged to make it known. Sometime after he had beſtowed this money the plague having been ſore in *Aire*, and trade much decayed, he himſelf fell under ſome ſtraits, and ſome of the prophane in that place, begun to make it their upcaſt, that Religion had made him poor, and his giving much to others like a fool, made him now want himſelf; the profeſſion and the credite of it was alwayes this godly man's darling, which made him quite the countrey at that time, and borrowing a little money went over to *France*, that he might the better conceal his ſtrait; when he came to *Rochel*, the ſalt and other commodities were become exceeding cheap, becauſe there had been no trading of a long time, on which he adventured to fraught a ship, and loaden her upon credite; he himſelf came over the neareſt *to England*, and thence to *Aire*, with expectation of the ships returne; but after long onwaiting he was informed for certaine, that his ship was taken with the *Turks*, which became matter of great exerciſe to him not becauſe he knew not how to be abaſed, aſwel as how to abound; but, fearing leſt the mouths of wicked men, might ſo much the more on this occaſion be opened to reproach the profeſſion, that for many dayes he kept his chamber; at laſt a maid who had heard amongſt the people that *Iohn ſtewart's* ship was arrived

arrived in the roade came running and cryed at the door that his ship was come; but he being at prayer, could not be moved from his Master's company, till he was satisfyed, and then went forth and saw it was a truth; but as a further ground of present exercise to him a worthy Christian and great intimat of his *John kennedy*, vvho for joy had gone forth in a smal boat to the ship, by the sudden falling dovvn of a storme vvas carried by the ship & in the judgement of all that lookedon, he and the boat vvere svvallovved up, yea the storme increased at that rate that they feared the loss of the ship also; which did so deeply affect this gracious man, that for three dayes he could be seen by none, under the weight of such a trial; but at last, having gone forth to visite the widow (as then supposed) whilst with that family they were mutually witnessing grief, John kennedy immediatly comes in, who had not been cast away, but by a strange providence the boat had been driven a far way to another place of the coast: here at once many mercies did meet, he vended the commodities of the ship, which having payed all his debt, returned him twentie thousand merks more to himself: thus was that bread cast upon the waters, and to appearance lost, after many dayes returned, and that witnessed *that by liberal devices the liberal man doth stand*. I must add a word upon the death of this worthy man, whilst then his friends came to see him, he oft used this word, *be humble*, and anent his own case, he said, I go the way of all flesh, and it may be some of you doubt nothing of my welbeing; yea I testify that except when I slept, or was on business, I was not these ten years without thoughts of God, so long as I could be in going from my house to the cross, and yet I doubt my self, and am in great agonie, yea at the brink of dispair; but a day or two be-

fore he dyed he turned his face to the wall, from company, for two houres, & then Mr *Iohn Fergusson* came in, a grave and godly Minister of that place, who asked what he was doing, upon which he turned himself, with these words, I have been fighting & working out my salvation, with fear and trembling, and now I bless God it is perfected, sealed, confirmed, and all fears are gone.

It is a memorable instance known yet to many in the north of *Ireland* of a choise and godly gentlewoman when the rebellion brake up there, who fled with some other persons with her & three children one of them upon the breast, they had not gone far, till they were striped naked by the *Irish*, who to admiration spared their lives (it is like thinking the cold and hunger would kill them) afterwards, going on, at the foot of a river which runs in to Locheach, others met them, and will have them cast in to the river; but this godly woman not dismayed, asked a little liberty to pray, and as she lay naked on the frozen ground, got resolution not to go on her own feet to such an unjust death, upon which having called her and she refusing, was dragged by the heels along that rugged way to be cast in, with the rest of her company; but she then turned and on her knees sayes, you should, I am sure, be Christians, and men I see you are; in taking away our miserable lives you do us a pleasure; but know, that as we never wrong'd you, nor yours, you must remember to dye also yourselves, and one day give an account of this cruelty to the judge of heaven and earth, on which an irish priest then present, said, let us not take their lives, but we will put them into this Island of the lake, a boat being at the river all the eight naked and without meat are turned into that Island, where after four dayes staying,

ing, ſome of the company dyed for hunger, and cold, but not this woman or any of her children; for she lived by faith, upon the word of God and not by bread only: a day after, the two boys having crept aſide, found the hide of a beaſt, which had been killed, at the root of a tree, which the mother & they endeavoured to get caſt over them then lying upon the ſnow: the next day a little boat goes by, unto whom she cals, for Gods ſake to take her out; but they being Irish would not, she deſired a little bread, they ſaid they had none, then she begs a coal of fire, which she obtained, for she had ſeen ſmoak in the boat, and thus with ſome fallen chips made a little fire, and the boyes taking a piece of the hide laid it on the coals, and began to gnaw the leather, but without an exraordinary divine ſupport what could this do? Thus they lived ten dayes without any viſible mean of help, & that good woman profeſſed it was by faith and joy in God, that she did live; nor had she any bread but ice or ſnow, nor drink except water; but she thought God put more ſubſtance into it, and found it as it vvere clammy, the next day a boat carried her out, to the ſide of the Band vvater, vvhere she had yet been loſt, but that she could not ſuffer to ſee her children dye in her ſight, and though the tvvo boyes vvere young and ſo ſtarved that they had no ſtrength, she preſſed them to go out of her ſight, under pretence of ſeeking ſome fire, and bids them hold their face to ſuch an airth, where in that deſolate countrey she knew they could have no fire, yet in ſuch an extreme left roome for God to work their ſafety: the poor children were not able and had not gone far till they ſaw two or three great dogs eating a man who had been killed, the children were affraid at the ſight of the dogs (who needed not fear any thing but to live in ſuch

a condition and one of the) came running and leaped upou one of the children without doing him the leaſt hurt, but fawned on them, and would run tle before, and then tarry till the children came up, and ſo led them on to a houſe where ſmoak appeared, which was an irish man's protected by the English in *Antrum*, by whoſe means they were marvellouſly preſerved, and the mother ſent for and ſuccoured by a party from *Antrum*. I would ſhut this paſſage up with ſomething truely obſervable anent this gentlewoman's husband, who was a ſweet humoured Gentleman, and godly, and one who uſed to frequent that famous Friday's meeting at *Antrum* before that rebellion brake up; but being inſnared by ſome Arminians then in the bounds, the worthy Miniſters in that place, after ſome pains taken on him, could not prevail, *Mr Blair* being there, had this word to a friend who told it to a godly Miniſter in that place, from whom I had this paſſage, *I am of opinion that this Gentleman, ſhall either turn penitent or mad before many dayes.* Which fell out, for he fell ſo furiouſly mad that they were driven to the neceſſity of binding him, and thus for a year continued, though with ſome more ſober intervals, and then would bewail his caſe, at the end of the year, being very furious, he was taught of the devil, but by an overreaching providence of God, to feign himſelf ſober, and intreated his wife to be rid of the manacles, which was done; but at the break of day riſing took the coverlet of the bed about him, and went with reſolution to drown himſelf in the river; but when he was at the brink thereof, had this ſuggeſted to him, he was a fool to drown the covering, for it might be uſeful which made him go a little back, and lay it down at the root of a tree, and then with full reſolution went to throw himſelf in; but this was ſuggeſted

gested to him again at the very brink, were it not best to pray, before I dye? On which he turned a little and falls down to prayer; but ere, he had done, his wit and judgement was returned, with peace of conscience, and assurance of pardon, in as large measure as ever he injoyed these in his life, and thus returned in a sober frame to the astonishment of his wife.

IX. There is a strange passage of judgement that amongst the memorable things of the providence of God I think worthy of inserting, it concernes a Noble man in our own countrey, whose name with respect to his house, I forbear to mention, who for many years by blood, cruelty and oppression, made himself a terror in that place of the countrey where he lived. One day his second son, who after succeeded to that house, by the death of his brother, found a letter sealed and directed to his father, bearing the stile of his house, and without any suspicion whence it came carried it up to his chamber, which, that Lord breaking up, found of a strange stile for it had these words, I summond you ——— to appear before the tribunal of God, and there answere for your murthers, oppressions. &c. *Subscribitur Diabolus*; upon which, he being inraged, drevv his svvord to have run his son thorovv, suppoſing it a contrived busines by him, but he escaped & was forced for many moneths to vvithdravv from the house; but upon the intercession of friends his father did condescend to admit him again, but that very day vvhilst they very met on this account, that noble man vvashing his hands in his bedchamber, and one of his servants by, a letter from the roof of that chamber drops dovvn upon his hands, sealed and directed as before, vvhich being opened had the very same vvords of the former letter vvith that dreadfull subscription *Diabo-*

lus, after vvhich by immediat ſtroke of the Lords hand, he vvas ſtrucke vvith a remarkable infatuation, and ſuch an horrour & fear upon his conſcience, that upon the appearance of the leaſt boy, he vvould have fled, and vvith houling ſought, to have sheltered himſelf under a bed, and in this caſe shortly dyed, having been made a terrour to himſelf, and the meaneſt perſon in caſe to qnash him, vvho made it his vvork to be terrible to others in his life, this (far from reflecting upon the houſe or family) vvith reſpect to the holding forth the holy & righteous Judgement of the Lord I could not omit to inſert the ſame, after ſome ſafe vvarrant as to the certainty thereof from theſe I had ground to believe. (¶)

SEVENTH Witnes to this truth, that the Lord hath in ſo ſolemn, and extraordinary a way appeared for his Church in theſe laſt times, is this, *Theſe great, and marvellous providences (which we may call* Magnalia Dei) *by which he hath witneſſed his truth, and confirmed the ſame ſince the breaking up of the Goſpel in this late raiſing of the Church from Antichriſt*; For we may truely ſay there hath not wanted a viſible atteſtation from Heaven, and a convincing teſtimony, by ſome great workes of the Lord, to his truth, as well as in the primitive times of the Church.

We do here underſtand by ſuch providences, theſe wherein man cannot but ſee ſomething above nature and natural cauſes, yea, above the ordinary way of the Lords working, which doth evidently witnes his great, and immediat hand, ſome whereof have been ſo wonderful, which can be inſtanced in theſe late times, as might truly be called miracles; it is true this is not the Lords uſual way, neither maketh he uſe of ſuch a ſolemn teſtimony, but on ſpecial, and weighty grounds, when the neceſſity of the Church calleth

calleth for it, whileſt he is about ſome extraordinary piece of work, or when the Goſpel cometh firſt to a land that hath been long overſpread with darknes, when ordinary meanes of conviction are wanting, or in times of great oppoſition, when the commiſſion of his Servants needeth ſome extraordinary ſeal; in ſuch a time as that of Achabs, when the People are made to halt betwixt truth, and a falſe way, and thus we finde the Lord did confirm the firſt breaking up of the Goſpel, and make uſe of ſuch a mean to ſpread the Chriſtian Church through the World, and ſhould this ſeem ſtrange that in ſo great a change of the Churches caſe now in the latter dayes, when he was to raiſe her up, after ſo long a ruin, and deſolation, whileſt Antichriſtianiſme ſo many ages had overſpread the face of the World, that he ſhould thus appear, and give ſome ſignal demonſtration of his power in behalfe of his People, ſuch as we have ſeen with our eyes, and our Fathers did tell us.

It is not miracles, or any extraordinary providence on which men ſhould reſolve their faith, nor do we here mention theſe, for laying ſtreſſe thereon in believing the truth, no, the Proteſtant doctrine, and cauſe doth lean on a ſtronger ground, it can with confidence appeal the adverſary to the Scripture, theſe divine records which they do not pretend to deny, this, even this is the reaſon of our hope, which we offer to all that ask for the ſame, and there let the God of truth who hath revealed his will, and anſwers men by the written word be judge, and we ſhall demand no greater advantage, nor juſtice at the hand of our enemies; we know miracles cannot authorize a lye, or be a ſeal to any thing repugnant to the Scripture; and truely theſe lying wonders which have been ſo frequent in the World, which the Apoſtle

doth foretel that such an engine the Devil will make use of, to turn men aside from the truth, besids other marks of their falsehood, they have this one most discernable, that they are the support and warrant of that which cannot stand alone by the Word; and thence are the Popish miracles made use of to confirm such tenets which of all their doctrine do most directly contradict the Scripture, as the merit of works, purgatory, praying for the dead, &c. But as we will not boast of such, as the authority, or proof of our doctrine, so we judge it a grave, and a concerning duety to observe the wondrous works of the Lord in our times, yea, to make a diligent search thereanent, that we may tell posterity some of these great acts of our God, for his Church, in bringing her again from Babel.

I would desire to be very tender, and cautious upon such a subject, for I judge it horrid divinity to make a lye for God; it is not the truth, but a false way which requireth such a help, and truely anent these following instances, which are but a few of many that might be brought if there were more serious enquiry, I dare attest the Lord, the great witnes that I have not knowingly set down here any' thing false, yea, not without some diligent search, and satisfying grounds anent the certainty thereof. I judge it not necessary to repeat these which are so known already to the World from publick records, and therefore shall but briefly point at some of these, and adde a few more particular instances of this kinde, which I may with some confidence bring to the light, from clear evidences of the truth thereof.

I shall first mention that solemn testimony of Mr *Baynam* in Queen Maryes time who in the midst of the fire,

fire, whileſt his body was all in a flame, his armes, and legs halfe burnt, cryed out to byſtanders, *O Papiſts, ye look after miracles, lo here is one. I am now burning in this fire, but feels no more pain then if I were in a bed of roſes*, O muſt not this be called a miracle, and an extraordinary ſeal from the Lord, to his truth, wherein the World would conſider, this was the teſtimony of one, who was upon the borders of eternity, which he did declare before a great multitude, atteſted by Mr *Fox* that holy ſervant of Chriſt who in things of that kinde ſo extraordinary was moſt cautious, and did much ſearch out the truth, and certainty of what he ſets down, and by him was published whileſt many of that time, who might have been preſent were alive, yea, it is the more remarkable, the sharp combat that this Martyr had through the terrour of the fire a little before his death, fearing he ſhould never be able to endure the ſame.

What a remarkable providence was that at a town in the Low Countryes, whileſt ſome of the Saints were put to death, by the Popiſh party, and among theſe one *Michael Bomboutius* a Deacon of the reformed Church, whileſt they were going to ſuffer about midday the Heavens being moſt clear, there came ſuddenly ſo great a darknes, and ſo horrible, and unuſual a tempeſt which was onely in that place and above that city diſcerned, that men were generally ſhaken with fear, thinking there ſhould be a preſent diſſolution of the World; this famous *Voetius* in that piece *de ſignis*, doth witnes that from divers there preſent even ſome of them popiſh he had this related to himſelf, and as he ſayeth, ſuch a thing Papiſts would have with greateſt obſervation published, as the very finger of God, if they had the ſame occaſion.

At

At a town Alſa in Weſtflanders whileſt a godly man whom the Inquiſition there had purſued, was leading to the ſtake, and was by the way ſinging Pſalmes, the Captain of theſe who guarded him was ſo enraged, that he cauſed preſently his tongue be plucked out by the rootes, but lo a few moneths after, this wretched man hath a Childe born with his tongue hanging out a great way, which by no meanes could be keept within his mouth, this Doctor Hall being himſelfe afterwards in that town had shewed him from ſome who were moſt conſiderable there, as he ſets down in his Epiſtles.

Charles the IX. of France who was author of that horrid Maſſacre where the blood of many thouſand Proteſtants at Paris, and other parts was shed, did a very little after dye in the ſtrength of his yeares, by an extraordinary effuſion of blood from all paſſages of his body, that as Du Serres, and other french writers of that time do shew he was made to wallow in his own blood before his death. O was not this the very finger of God, a moſt convincing ſtupendious piece of his judgement?

What an extraordinary providence was that which is atteſted by divers witneſſes thereto, in the late bloody Maſſacre of Ireland; a young woman who by the Irishes was ſtript almoſt naked, and after by one of them threatned that except she would give him her money, he would forthwith run her through, to which she gravely anſwered; I knovv you cannot kill me except God give you leave, whereupon he did three times with his ſword run at her naked body, but could not once pierce her skin, which did ſo confound this wretched man, that with a kinde of horrour he went away and ceaſed to trouble her further.

Did

Did not God wonderfully appear in the raiſing of the late King of Sweden, with that aſtonishing ſucceſſe, which did attend him in breaking the power of the houſe of Auſtria, whileſt they were at ſo great an height, and had their hands hot reeking in the blood of the Proteſtants through Bohemia, and other places of Germany, O but the Lords hand might be clearly ſeen in acting forth, and fitting that party of the Swedes, for ſuch a piece of his ſervice, even in a more then ordinary way, who like that he Goat mentioned in Daniel did come ſo ſwiftly that they touched not the ground, as it were; but like a mighty ſpeate bare down all before them.

The breaking of that great Spanish Armado in the Year 88. which had been 3 yeares in contriving, did convincingly witnes a divine hand oppoſing the ſame, and how remarkable was that iſſue of all the Counſels, expence, and cruelty, which Philip the ſecond had made uſe of to bear down the riſing of the Goſpel in the Netherlands; for it is notour that after many eſſayes, the loſſe of an 100 Millions of gold, with near 400000 Lives, the reckoning of all his gain, and purchaſe was only the loſſe of a conſiderable part of theſe countryes, and helping fordward the eſtabliſhment of the united Provinces; and truely we muſt ſay the Lord did by his great, and outſtretched hand wonderfully appear in raiſing that Common wealth, ſo that they may date their flowriſhing in outward intereſt from their owning of the intereſt of God. Religion did raiſe them and no People this day hath more cauſe, and are under greater engadgements to be zealous for the truth, and defence of the Proteſtant Cauſe.

The breaking of that formidable league of the Catholicks in France for rooting out the Proteſtant Religion

ligion there was very wonderful, how all their Counsels, and designes should resolve in their own ruin, so that the most ordinary onlookers, could not but see a divine hand counteracting the same: *Davila* though an adversary, in setting down that history, giveth a large account of this.

What a great appearance of the Lords hand, yea, of an extraordinary providence, was there in the throwing down of the Popish images, and altars, almost in one night throw much of the Netherlands, which for so many 100 yeares had been made use of for idolatry. O did not Sathan thus fall as lighning from Heaven, it being very evident how strange an impulse did carry out the People in this, over all difficulties, or fear of hazard, what a wonderful consent and agreement amongst places so remote about one thing, and almost at one time; how quickly also was it executed though these Provinces almost in an instant, the authors did never appear, nor any noise of their boasting thereanent; and which was strange the Magistrates of the cities, having both power and will to hinder, yet were so overruled and struck with astonishment, that they could not resist; and as *Famianus Strada* a great enemy to the truth doth shew what fell out in Antwerp, and other places, considering the greatnes of the work, the multitude, and height of these idolatrous monuments it might have been enough for many dayes, what was done in one night, and yet not any in the least prejudged or hurt thereby, which made him cry out, that sure this was the work of the Devil, and his help eminently therein: but I doe not wonder, to hear these in such a manner blaspheme, whilest they are tormented with so clear a discovery of Gods hand against them.

Must

Muſt vve not here mention that great deliverance of the tovvn of Leyden from the Spanjard, vvith a ſpecial remark, vvhileſt it vvas then maniſeſt, if the enemy had made uſe of Cannon in battering the vvals, they could not have come ſhort of their deſigne: in vvhat an extraordinary vvay alſo vvere the vvinds tryſted to raiſe the vvaters in order to the touns relief, vvhen they vvere at the utmoſt extremity, yea for driving the vvaters back again, vvhen the toun vvas once delivered, and vvhich vvas very marvellous, that the ſame night, vvherein the Spanjards vvere forced to retire, a part of the vvals fell dovvn, vvhich if it had fallen out a litle before, that city had been utterly loſt. O vvas not this a divine hand, which even the greateſt Atheiſts, and ſuch who judge things to fall out by chance, muſt confeſſe?

What wonderful providences did attend the actings of that poor handful of proteſtants in the Valleyes of Piemont, for their neceſſary ſelfe-defence; *Fox* with other vvriters give a clear account in ſetting down that horrid perſecution which they endured in the year 1555. I ſhall here onely touch ſome paſſages mentioned by Mr *Morland* in his Hiſtory, who upon the account of that bloody Maſſacre, which vvas there vvithin theſe fevv years, vvas then near that place, and from ſure knovvledge, and information doth very gravely hold forth the ſame; and truely they are providences ſo marvellous, and aſtoniſhing, that men cannot but ſee the Lord in an extraordinary vvay helping that poore People, his acting forth a few to do ſuch exploits, beyond any thing that can be mentioned of theſe great Heroes, vvhom the World in former yeares did admire; ſo that we muſt ſay, as this vvas a convincing proof of the great povvr of God, put forth for his People, vvhen help in an

an ordinary vvay failed, it vvas also a solemn testimony to their cause, and of the Lords approbation of his Peoples standing for their ovvn defence against the cruelty, and violence of a persecuting Magistrat. We have there held forth, hovv after that bloody persecution by an order from the Duke of Savoy, a small number vvas in a remarkable vvay raised up, and upon their first essay 7or 8 under the conduct of that worthy Gentleman *Iosua Gianavell* (whom God made use of as a choise instrument, to help that poor scattered remnant) vvas made to fight 300 souldiers who were sent to exerce further cruelty in that place, killing many of them and persueing the rest for a considerable time. After, a party of 500 being sent by the Marquise of Pianeza who then commanded the Duke of Savoyes forces, vvere opposed by 11 of the Protestants, and other 6 vvith slings, and after a short conflict were forced to flee with considerable slaughter the terrour of the Lord upon the one, and a spitit of courage&resolution in the other being verymanifest. After these,there vvas an other party sent forth of 700 souldiers to sease on all the passages, upon which about 17 Masters of families, whosehearts God had in signal manner strengthned to the battel, for their poor brethrens preservation, resolved to cast themselves upon the Lord for the successe of their undertakings, and vvith such marvellous boldnes faced their adversaries as put them in amazement and made them dravv off, resolving to take another vvay, but vvere still pursued by this little handful, vvho killed many vvithout the losse of one man. At an other time the Protestants there joyning in a greater number, being 300 under the conduct of the forementioned Captain *Gianavel* vvere assaulted by 2500 of the adversaries, but

but the Lord so ordered that this little party getting the advantage of the place, after some conflict did force them to retire, pursuing them into the woods, and steep rocks with great slaughter; and thus with a marvellous courage in a continued fight for eight houres together, did drive the enemy before them. Divers other remarkable passages of this kinde, are at more length mentioned in that History which the Author after most exact search, and enquiry thereanent, doth solemny attest, and truely it might be much cause for wonder as it is there observed that through the Lords eminent appearance, and his blessing on his poor Peoples endeavours, for the inteteſt of Religion, and their own preservation they did in a short time dispute the matter with such a prosperous successe, against all the forces, which the Duke of Savoy sent, that their enemies at last began to fear what effect it might produce, and therefore having no better game to play, were glad by a treaty of peace, to get the sword out of their hands, how ever they pretended it as a complement, put on neighbouring Princes, who did interceed for the same.

Have we not also to reckon among the great workes of the Lord in these last times, Henry the VIII. of England most violent in opposition to the truth, who by the Pope was stiled Defender of the faith upon that account, and for his writing against Luther, and yet the same man shall be the instrument made use of by the Lord, to throw down the Pope, and his power in his Dominions, and give some beginning to a great Reformation of the Church there.

Vergerius, the Popes Nuncio, for many years in Germany, whilest he is writing against the truth, is

even then converted, and forced to yeeld to the power of the same, turns Protestant, & a zealous Preacher of the Gospel to his death.

Galeacæus Carracciolus, an Italian Marquise of great place, and estate in the World, was so taken by the heart with one word, in hearing Peter Martyr, as made him quite not only all his hopes of preferment, a most pleasant place as was in the earth, and a great inheritance, but to go over the belly of the most pressing intreaties, and insinuations of his friends, the weeping cryes of his Lady, and Children, and go to a strange place quiting all; that he might preserve his conscience, and enjoy fellowship with the Church. O what a solemn witnes was this to the truth, and of the conquering power of Christ!

And in a word what a marvellous thing was it that poor Luther, against whom so much of the World was aloft, with greatest rage and violence, should yet live to an old age, and go to the grave in peace. And truely the Spirit and appearance of this great, & first witnes to the truth might be a convincing evidence, that the Lord was then to raise up a People to himselfe in whom he would be glorified, by an active testimony, as well as by suffering.

Besids these instances I would here mention some remarkable providences worthy indeed to be observed, though they are little known to the World, which we may say doth not only witnes the povver of God, but are a convincing seal to his truth, & the Churches Reformation in these last times.

It is a remarkable passage vvhich vvorthy *Mr Forbes* sets dovvn under his hand, vvhilest he vvas banished for the truth; vvhose vvords are these. In the year 1607. being at Ruan in France, and meeting with

with *Monsieur Figureus* that auncient, and famous divine, and then Pastor of the Reformed Church in that city, he had from him this following relation: After the close of the Councel of Trent in the time of Pius the V. there was a consultation in Italy by the Pope, and Cardinals, for an utter extirpation of the Reformed Churches in Europe, and to this end every Prince of the Romish Religion had a certain part designed where this great project should be put in practice: The death of Pius the V. hindred a present prosecuting of this design. And his successor Gregorius XIII. did suffer it to ly dead having no heart that way, and so until that time of Clemens VIII. it was not revived, but then this bloody resolution was of new ratified by him, and his Cardinals under their hands, and seals, the onely difficulty was in this, to find a fit, and trusty person whom they should make use of to the Princes of the Romish Religion, for engageing them to subscrive the said ordinance, and set about the execution thereof: At length a Gentleman of good parts, near in blood to the Cardinal Baronius is choised; which to him was a matter of much grief, and sorrow, for unknown to them he was of the Reformed Religion, but this grief in his countenance, and carriage, put his friends who observed the same to strange thoughts, and so much the more, that he did expresly declare to some of these who asked thereanent, that what to them seemed a cause of rejoycing, was to him a just occasion of grief, yet at last finding his hazard, upon a bitter challenge from the foresaid Cardinal who had heard thereof, he judged it his wisdome to dissemble, shewing him his unsuitablenes to so great an employment could not but be ground of trouble, and fear; and so was someway forced to engage, getting his commissions, the decree of the

Conclave, with letters to the foresaid Princes, sealed, and subscribed: But lo whileſt this poor Gentleman is on his journey, having found wayes to free himself of his servants, and other company, his spirit was in great perplexity betwixt these two grievous temptations, either to be instrument of utter ruin to the truth, and Churches of Christ, or forsake his countrey, inheritance and all he had in the World, upon which he resolved to retire himself out of the high way to an obscure village, where for three dayes he gave himself to fasting and prayer for direction, and resolution from the Lord, and and after this had his heart so strengthned against the care of his worldly estate, that he resolved to forsake all, and to reveal this bloody conspiracy to the Churches of Christ, and cast himself on Gods hand for his future estate, so that he turned his face from Spain, and took journey to France, and to Paris, where at that time remained the sister of Henry the IIII. a Religious Princesse, afterwards Dutchesse of Lorraine to whom the foresaid Monsieur Figureus was her preacher, and unto him made his addresse (though after divers refusals of admission upon suspicion) shewing him the whole businesse, and delivered the sealed decree with his letters of commission for that effect, and did likewise shew him (who was then astonished at such a wonderful providence of God, in fostering some of his own Children in the midst of Babylon, and that to so comfortable an use for his Churches safety) that there were many others in Italy, yea, in Rome it self of the Reformed Religion, who had their secret meetings, and even Gregory the XIII. before his advancement to the Papacy, was throughly clear thereanent in his judgement, whereof he gave him divers evidences: This foresaid relation did so affect Mr

Forbes

Forbes that he shewed his marvellous desire to see that man who had done so worthy, and gracious a work for the glory of God and good of his Church, and by a recommendation from Monsieur Figureus, he did afterwards go of set purpose to that place, taking the first opportunity for Heidelberg, where this Gentleman was then retired for his further security, and honourably entertaind by that Prince, where he sheweth that he saw him, and from his own mouth received the assurance of this former narration to his great satisfaction, and comfort: This is the very summe which I have here set down and truely transcribed off the principale, which I had beside me, both written, and subscribed by Mr Forbes his own hand.

A remarkable providence I shall also here set down, which did tryst with some very convincing circumstances, at the Parliament 1621. at their bringing in of Popish Ceremonies upon the Church, which was then a sad step of the lands defection from the truth, contraire to their engagements; whileſt the faithful Ministers of Jesus Christ at that time did with greateſt seriousnes and freedome obteſt, and warn these who were in power (alace, that now there is litle of such a Spirit appearing) that they would not, to please men corrupt the Worship of God, but the speat being violent, it did at last resolve in a Law; at which very time, whileſt the Kings Commissioner did rise from the throne to ratify this woeful act, by the touch of the Scepter, was even in this moment of that ratification tryſted by the God of Heaven, with an extraordinary lightning, and very unusual great claps of thunder, and these followved vvith a most strange, and extraordinary darknes, vvhich both for the suddainnes, and greatnes of the same did astonish, and

affright all who were present, and after all, so violent a downpowring of rain, as made the streets to run like a river, imprisoning the Lords within that house for an houre and an half; and truely as we are not hereon to lay stresse, or be peremptory in the application of particular providences, yet this was so very convincing as should not be passed without a special remark, considering first how at that time many of the choise Ministers of the Land, were together near the town, at fasting, and prayer, bewailing before the Lord such an avowed defection from the truth. 2. That likewise this horrid tempest, and darknes appeared to these who were at some distance, to be most directly above the toun, the darknes overshadowing that part onely, and was not so in other places. 3. That they had by the instigation of the Prelats, guarded the entry to the Parliament that day, lest any Ministers should have entred a protestation in behalf of the Church against these Articles, and thus thought themselves secure from any opposition of that kinde; but whilest they least suspected, they are met with a more publick, and visible witnes from Heaven against the same. 4. Which was also most strange upon the Monday following, whilest these acts were proclaimed, the Heavens did in the same manner, put on darknes with a most fearful tempest of thunder lightning and rain which continud all the time of their reading at the Crosse. And truely when the Lord thus doubled his warnings it might cry aloud for mens observation thereof.

The breaking of that journey to New-England which about the year 1636. was seriously intended by some of the choise Ministers and Christians in Ireland who were then much persecuted by the Prelates thou

though not from any fear of their own sufferings, but with a respect to a further liberty to serve the Lord in the work of the Gospel, when that door was shut upon them in their own country: This was truely a strange, and remarkable providence, and their preservation in some kind miraculous, anent which these circumstances are worthy to be observed. 1. That whilest their vessel amidst a tempestuous sea, and far from any land, was like a riddle with so many lakes; yea, the rudder of the Ship breaking, so that the Pilots were turned wholly hopelesse, and could not see any ground of safety in an ordinary way, a poor seaman by a remarkable providence, whose company they had much shunned was made the instrument of preserving the whole vessel; with a marvellous dexterity fastening the rudder, which others had given over, as one visibly sent by the Lord for that end. 2. The strong perswasion that some of these worthy Ministers had of their safety, which with great confidence they declared before the passengers, whilest the Master & others were giving it over as a hopelesse busſinesse, and seeing a convincing necessity for a return though it was very astonishing, and bitter at the first look, yet was afterwards followed with a clear discovery from the Lord, as one of them with much freedom did expresse his assurance to the rest of his brethren, that since the Lord would not accept their service in America, they should not want work, and service, whither he was sending them back by so remarkable a providence, as within a short time was evident, the downfal of the Prelats in Scotland and after in Ireland trysting shortly upon the back thereof, so that it may be said this was a convincing presage thereof, the Lord by a strong hand bringing back such choise, and useful instruments for that great

harveſt which did after follow, ſo that they could not but ſay, the Lord did in a very marvellous, and immediat way appear in that croſſe wind, and ſtorm, and thereby as if with an audible voice did witnes his minde in ſuch a diſappointment. 3. It was alſo moſt obſervable that none of theſe who on the account of their conſciences, that they might enjoy the purity of the ordinances, went in that journey vvas the vvorſe, but had a ſafe return, only ſome perſons who upon another account, expecting a fat ſoil, and outward advantage in that place, and had unexpectedly ſlipt in the veſſel, did all dye upon the ſea ſave one being 5 in number, and it was alſo vvonderful upon their return hovv the Lord as he had ſtayed the rage of the ſea, did alſo ſtill the tumults of People, which they found by experience, ſo that it did evidently give a dash, and became a terrour to their adverſaries.

I muſt here alſo ſet down a very ſingular, and ſtrange inſtance, we way ſay both of judgement and mercy which was in this land, not many years ago, a Gentleman whoſe ſtyle was *Waſtraw* a moſt bloody man, and otherwayes notour for profanity, but moſt in this, that it was his great work, and pleaſure to put difference betwixt men, & as it was at that time very eaſy to engadge them in blood, whileſt he had thus ſtirred up a neighbour Gentleman to kill an other in that place, finding him after ſore troubled in mind thereanent, he told him more of that practice would be the beſt cure, for he himſelf had killed 6, and that the firſt time he was much diſquieted but the longer he did continue, it became the more eaſy. But one day whileſt he was on ſuch an account riding to a place where two had tryſted to decide a privat quarrel by fighting, his horſe ſtumbles

on

on the side of a steep rock, and he falls a great way down, his sword falling out before him, yet without any hurt; and here by such a strange piece of providence did the Lord tryst and break in upon his conscience, so that he quits his journey, turns home with great trouble and remorse, a most kindly change following thereon, and for some yeares after witnessed much tendernes and repentance by his after walk, spent much time alone mourning before his death, and that day he dyed having no visible appearance thereof to these who looked on, he was heard in his chamber at much wrestling in prayer, and after long continuance, these of the house were forced to break up the door, getting no answer after long knocking, they find him dead in the room, but upon his knees in a prayer posture; and the whole blood of his body, which from every passage thereof had issued out, sweeming about him in the floore; it being visible how all these passages were opened for that effect, a most astonishing instance, declaring this to the World, though He pardon the iniquity of his People, yet some sins he will not let passe without a visible mark of his anger, but will take vengeance on their inventions.

What an observable passage is that also, known to many yet alive, anent a notorious robber in the south parts of this land, called *John of the Score* who for many years having driven that woeful trade, did one day rencounter a poor man travelling with two horses which he according to his custome takes away, the poor countryman falling down on his knees, did earnestly beg, that for Jesus Christ sake, he would give the one again, for he had no more to maintain his poor family, but what he could gain by them, but it was in vain, he carrieth them home with him,

leaving the poor man in that desolate condition, but a little after, he turns dumpish, and melancholy, could get no rest, or quiet, not knowing the cause, but as he professed, that these words the poor man had spoke to him, (though he was so great an Atheist, that he understood not what he meant when he spake of Christ) were lying like a heavy weight upon his spirit, and whilest he was sought after for his robberies he desired his sonnes to shift for themselves, for he could not go out of the way, there being a restraint upon him, and something within him that in a kinde bound him from going out of the way, and thus stayed at his house until he was apprehended, brought in to Edinburgh, and there put up in prison, upon which a godly Minister *Mr Henry Blyth* with a Christian Gentleman *William Cuningham Tutor of Bonitoun*, who had sometimes known him, make a visit, holding forth to him his miserable estate, and the hazard of his soul, (for he was judged by the Law to dye) and amongst other words, shewing him the necessity to flee to Jesus Christ, he doth suddenly break out with a cry, *O what word is that, for it hath been my death, that is the word that hath lyen upon my heart since the poor man spake it to me; so that I had no power from that time to go out of the way*, and after being told what an one Christ was without whom he could not be saved, he cryeth: *O will he ever look to me, and shew mercy that for his sake would not shew mercy to that poor man, and give him back his horse*, but after further instruction, a most real, and gracious change did appear upon him, he gave most convincing evidences of the reality thereof, attained to great assurance before his death, and upon the scaffold in the publick streets where he was executed did speak so wonderfully of the

the Lords dealing with him, and with such knowledge, and judgement, as left a conviction on all present, and forced them to see a truth, and reality in the grace of God.

An other notable instance of grace, with a very remarkable passage in his condition, I shall here mention, one *Patrick Mackelwrath*, who lived in the West parts of Scotland, whose heart the Lord in a remarkable way touched, and after his conversion, as he shewed to many of his Christian friends, was in such a frame so affected with a new World wherein he was entred, the discoveries of God, and of a life to come, that for some moneths together he did scarce ever sleep but was still taken up in wondring, his life was very remarkable for tenderness, and near converse with God in his walk, and which was worthy to be noticed, one day after a sharp tryal, having his only son suddenly taken away by death he retired alone for several houres, and when he came forth did look so chearfully that to those who asked him the reason thereof, and wondered at the same in such a time, he told them he had got that in his retirement with the Lord, that to have it afterwards renewed he would be content to loose a son every day. This one remarkable passage I would set down, it had been long his burden the want of memory that he could retain almost nothing of what he heard from the word, and bitterly complaining thereof to worthy Master *James English* Minister of Daly, his counsel to him was when he heard any truth which he desired to remember, to hold it up to the Lord, and desire him to keep it for him, and give him it back according to his need, which accordingly this blessed Man did with much seriousnes

prac-

practice, and on his death bed, to his Minister, and divers Christians that were present, he did solemnly declare how wonderfully the Lord had answered, and condescended to him in that particular, for as they knew how much formerly it had been his burden, the want of memory, now the Lord had given him back all these truths that he had put in his keeping, so that what for many yeares before he had heard, was now most clearly brought to his remembrance, which he witnessed by repeating many particular truths, and notes of Sermons which at such, and such times he had heard.

Now to shut up this, we have truely cause to say even from late experience, since this dark night came upon the Church in these Nations, with so sharp a storm of persecution, there hath not wanted some very signal, and convincing providences witnessing the Lords appearance for his People, and against their enemies, which are worthy of a remark, and may let men see that there is one higher then the highest, who ruleth in the Kingdomes of the Children of men, for it is manifest.

1. How eminently the Lord did appear in breaking that party who had been the great instruments both in Counsel, and Action to break the government of the Church of Christ in this land, and lay so much of his vineyeard waste, and desolate, and this, in the height of their power, and greatnes, whilest they seemed most firmly rooted. O how evident was a divine hand there, that this Cabbal who made it their great work to raise up Prelacy, and oppresse the poor Church, and like a violent tempest did carry all before them, in a momet, when they could have least

leaſt expected, should be made to fall, yea, in ſo short a time be turned out of their places, and offices, who but a little before had turned out ſo many of the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt; and that great man, who put forth his power and authority ſo much to turn many of the godly of the Land both Miniſters and others, out of their houſes and families, toſſing them from place to place, should thus be dealt with from the Lord, and recompenced with that meaſure, being forced to quite his lodging once, and again, yea even to banish himſelf out of the countrey, who had been the chief inſtrument to banish ſome of the moſt choiſe ſervants of Chriſt. and this ſtroke alſo made to tryſt them from that hand whence they could have leaſt expected, whoſe intereſt they ſtudied to promote in oppoſition to Gods; I should deſire to ſtudy ſobriety, and fear in application of the judgements of God, bnt when the Lord doth ſo clearly reveal himſelf and shew forth ſuch an evident reſemblance, betwixt mens ſin, and their ſtroke, I think it cryeth aloud for a ſerious obſerving thereof.

2. Should we paſſe without a remark, ſo ſolemn a witnes from the Lord of his reſpect to his Peoples ſufferings in this late time? for it is known, with what marvellous reſolution, and chearfulnes, theſe have been carried through, who were called forth to reſiſt unto the blood in their adherence to the truth, witneſſing to the conviction of onlookers even their greateſt enemies, ſomething above Roman Gallantry, yea, ſomething above nature in that ſtayednes and elevation of their Spirits, and as ſome of all ranks in the land the Lord would have brought forth to ſeal, and witnes his truth, and the work of Reformation, ſo it hath been alſo clear, that none wanted a large

a large measure of support, and strength for the tryal, their suffering still giving a further dash to their adversaries.

3. It is also manifest, and may be truly matter of wonder, by what a marvellous providence so many suffering and desolat families have been carried through without any obvious noise of their straites, now for these divers yeares, with such convincing chearfulnes, yea, the experience of many made to witnes that they never lesse knew a strait, then since they were put from the ordinary meanes of their support, and others who have been more sharply tryed, could not reckon any such plunging strait and difficulty, but have also found outgate by some remarkable providence trysted, I am very sure amongst other advantages yet of these times, this shall be one, a large Register of Experience, and remarkable confirmations of the truth of the word, and promise, which the godly have had under this sharp tryal, that will be sweet matter for an after reckoning and a greater gain then any losse their former sufferings did occasion. Yea, have we not seen, what in an ordinary way looked as irrecoverable, a stroke which a generation could not have made up, hath been a mean the Lord hath choised to promote his glory, and thereby declare himselfe to be God, hath he not made us see, how easy it is for him to turn the sharpest storm to the great advantage of his Church, that he can act in desperate cases, above the skill both of Angels, and men, and truely though we should be brought yet more low even to the place of Dragons, this may uphold the shaking hearts of his People, and be solid ground of confidence, that Christs power and faithfulnes is this day engadged for his Chutch

Church, and truth, he must encrease, his Kingdome is upon the rising hand, and shall yet have a more glorious appearance in the World, what ever become of instruments, the reviving of his work is not in the reverence of men; and since we know the Lord hath solemnly declared war against Antichrist, and all who will oppose the spreading of the Gospel in these last times, yea, hath past his word to the Church, for the fall and ruin of that adversary, fall he must, though the dust of the earth should arise for that end, and it is sure Prelacy must also wither, that hath its life, and sap from that accursed root; they have this day a desperat cause in hand, who do engage their power to support the throne of the Beast, for they run in the way of the wrath, and vengeance of the Lord, and shall surely involve themselves in that ruin; though they vvere the greatest Princes of the earth. I shall onely adde, we have much ground in these times to believe that the Lord shall yet appear, and make himself known in the earth, by as great, and convincing providences both of judgement and mercy, as in any former ages, and thus vindicat his glory, and refute the Athisme of this generation, by such an argument, as shall force iniquity to stop its mouth.

Now since this is sure, which none can get denyed if they will but allow some serious thoughts thereanent, that the Scripture falleth not to the ground, for *Gods way is perfect and his word is tryed*, *Ps.* 18: *ver.* 30. O is it not also sure, and a conclusion well grounded that *He is a buckler to those who trust in him*, none needs fear to venture his interests through time on the word, yea, if there could be any thing greater then a Heaven, or eternal salvation, the testimony

of

of the God of truth might be sufficient security for the same; it is a small matter how this World doth reel, and stagger, or what be the changes of outward things, that is enough, the promises of the Word shall certainly take place and the expectation of the Saints shall not make them ashamed.

An

AN APPENDIX.

IT is ſure the demonſtration of divine truth held forth in the Scripture, is the greateſt diſcovery, that ever came to the ſons of men, which with a more excellent light, and greater luſte, doth inlighten theſe parts of the earth, on which it ſhines, then the ſun, in its Noonday brightnes; this is the word of life, even the hidden wiſdom of God, in a myſtery, which moſt of the World do not underſtand, but flee from the ſame, as their plague and torment; but hereby the followers of God, know they are of the truth, and do aſſure their heart before him; it ſhould be matter of aſtoniſhment, if thus the Scripture were not confirmed, to ſee what rage the breaking up of this light cauſeth amongſt men, which now in the preſent time does in a ſtrange manner appear, not againſt ſome particular truth only, and the uppermoſt boughs, but by a remarkable aſſault, ſeems to ſtrike at the root, the very being of truth and godlines: it may be ſaid, whilſt ſuperſtition in times of greater ignorance, did overcloud and darken the viſible Church, Atheiſm hath taken up its room, to wear this generation out, from under the aw of God, and weaken their aſſent to the truth; for we ſee men every where making it their worke, to load his way with reproach, and put diſcredit on his faithfulnes who is the God of truth; As a witnes thereto is this ſmall eſſay directed, and now again comes

forth to the World, with an enlargment; Which I may say, was not intended, if there had not been a preſſing motive, from the uncorrectednes of the firſt impreſſion, and for this, I ſhall make no further Apology: But if a ſubject of ſo great an import, ſuffer no prejudice from ſuch an unfit pen, the favourable teſtimony of men, or their cenſures, I ſhould deſire to looke on (as they are indeed) at a diſtance and far below that ſolid peace of the ſoul, which in the acceptation of God, is alone to be found: What acceſs it may have to many of this generation, I know not, who are taking all advantage to ſtrengthen their prejudice at the truth, and unſetle others therein; it is like ſuch may paſs their judgement thereon at the firſt looke, and throw it aſide. But as a Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, who believes an appearing before the judge, and would deſire mercy to be found faithful in that day, being preſſed in ſome meaſure upon the horrid appearance of the Atheiſm and blaſphemy of the time, with that avowed indifferency, now within the viſible Church, in theſe great intereſts of Religion, and godlines, I lay this witnes to the truth at their door; and ſhall here offer a few thoughts further on this ſubject, in ſome clear *Inferences*, from that great truth of the verification of the Scripture.

Inference I. Which we may ſee clear, is this, the great advantage a Chriſtian hath for his eſtabliſhment; that his ſecurity is indeed greater then his intereſt, or any thing he hath to adventure thereon; and ſure, that is not ſmall; ſince the matter is of no leſs earneſt, beſides his concernments through time, then an eternity, a Heaven, or the hazard of hell for ever. This muſt require a ſolid, and ſure foundation, yea we may judge the furtheſt degree of certainty, where

where the ſuperſtructure is ſo great; for it is not opinion, or a probable conjecture, can be a ſutable baſis, to bear up that weight; but here, to anſwere ſuch an intereſt, and give through quiet and repoſe to the ſoul, we have the truth, and teſtimony of God, with this great witneſs thereto, that it aſſuredly takes place, and not one ſyllabe fals to the ground, without an evident performance. There are two things which, I am ſure, men could not, with ſuch ordinary thoughts conſider, yea think thereon, without amazement, if they made it not their choice, to keep at a diſtance: One is, that ſuch a thing is in the World this day as the very Word of God, that is more ſure, then an audible voice from Heaven, to declare his whole counſel, and hold forth unto men the true way up towards that countrey; and does thus marvellouſly diſcover it ſelf, 1. To come ſo low down, even his word and teſtimony who ſpeaks from Heaven, that therewith it hath a ſolemn appeal to mens ſence and feeling anent its certainty. 2. Which commends it ſelf upon the neareſt approach, and found the more unvaluable & of the greater price, the more it is ſearched into by an inqniry. 3. That though clear and plain in it ſelf, yet by a ſupernatural light, and evidence can only be known, which no human ſagacity nor reaſon in its higheſt elevation, without this can reach; but riſeth far above the greateſt capacity, and enduements, of which by nature, the moſt excellent ſpirits of men can boaſt. In a word, when once it ſhines in upon the ſoul, does then diſcernably ſtamp the very ſame image thereon, and begets ſuch a marvellous likeneſs betwixt them, as may show the World this is a living thing. But there is a ſecond, we may alſo conſider with aſtonishment how great it is, to

be a Christian, and of what marvellous import that is, I suppose there were but one or two such, to be found in the World, who were certainly known to be partakers of the divine nature, to have a real converse with God, and by experience with the word; might not the report thereof give men a strange alarme? yea put them upon an impatient search and inquiry, to know if this be sure, and what such a discovery means: O is it small to be the son of a King! But the hope and claime of a Christian riseth higher, and hath another reach, that such within a short time, whilest now in so mean a garb, shall be assuredly entered into glory, in the immediat injoyment of God, and of the fulness of joy among that triumphant society of the Angels, the Prophets, and Apostles, and all these who are before the Throne, washed, and made white in the blood of the Lamb, and thus continue through the ages of eternity; yea in that very instant of the souls quiting the body must admit so great a change, and enter there, where Heaven only can make us know what Heaven is; it is surely a strange sleep men are in, who in such concernment, are not awaked to a further inquiry: It were well if some would but allow reason its true use, whilst they travel betwixt the Poles, and can adventure to the furthest parts of the earth to pursue that, which they must so shortly forego: To judge seriously and bring the thoughts of this near, what a greater interest and at a more easy rate, and of an unexpressibly greater value, then that gold and treasure which ever came from the *Indies*, does offer itself, I say, the profest Atheism of some gives not more cause of wonder, then the strange stupidity of others, and that common and easy way men have in giving an

assent

assent to divine truth: I do not mean from the want of evidence and perspicuity, but because of the greatness of the things here hold forth; this was not so strange, that we find two of the Disciples of Christ at a stand, from joy and wondering, to credite his resurrection, even whilest they saw it verifyed; so great was this in their eyes. Now as to this I must further point at two or three things, which seriously considered, may seem a strange contradiction to reason. 1 how men can finde a pillow to rest on, who certainly know their breath, for these few hours in in the night, is not made sure; but if by a sudden arrest of death it should be stopt, which is no strange thing in the World, they know not what is next; but every night, sleeps at an adventure of being, ere the next day, in an irrecoverably lost estate, yea is not here cause of wonder, that whilest we see time make such swift dispatch, dying men can be in that measure estranged from the thoughts of death, who so oft may hear it sound, and the bell ringing for others, yea by previous assaults discerne its approach on themselves, which once come, then man goes off the stage, to returne no more, nor shall he for all the ages of eternity ever act that schene of life, here over again. 2. How strange it is that the supposal of the truth and certainty of the Scripture, that such a thing may be, does not more alarme men, and mar their quiet; or that they can so much as think of an eternal estate without trembling, whilest they are at no solid determination in such a matter; yea when the Scripture of God does not only witness a Heaven and immortality, but shews the World, there is such a thing as the first fruits, and earnest of it, whereof men here may be

fully assured. I would know, if such an Atheisme is to be found, that puts the Atheist beyond fear and doubting, even in his most professed confidence, and scoffing at the truth, or can sufficiently salve that heart aking, and continued hesitation he is under, that such a thing may be true. 3. I shall adde it is matter of wonder men should admit the report and attestation of others, anent the truth and reality of godliness, who yet live strangers to it themselves; yea should be at some toile and paines, and come a length to be almost Christians, without pursuing this in greater earnest.

Inference II. Which from the Scriptures accomplishment is clear, is this, that there is a special debt on each Christian, on whose soul the truth and faithfulness of God is sealed, to give in his seal thereto, and bear witness, that God is true. Thus is there a mutual sealing, which is undeniably clear, you see 2 *Cor.* 1: *ver.* 22. the Lords putting to his seal, which by all his people is well known; and have you not also, *John* 3: *ver.* 33. the Christians seal and witness most expressly held out and call'd for. This is indeed a duty, in which, we may say, the meanest of the Saints wants not his part, who hath that witness within himself, whereby he knows the certainty of the words of truth, which is a great thing, that such, on solid ground, can say he does not more clearly see the truth, writen in the Bible before him, then he knows and can read, but by an other character, and engravening, this writen within him, though none else can read the same, but he who hath it. I know there is a debt to the least Scripture truth, which these who profess the same does owe, when a witness and confession is call'd for, and hath thus spe-

cial

cial acceſs, in a ſuffering time, to ſet to his ſeal by a cloſs adherence thereto: But we muſt ſay, this is ſomething elſe, that concerns the confirmed Chriſtian, as a peculiar debt he owes to the truth and faithfulneſs of his God (which his ſoul knows well, and hath had oft confirmed) to give unto him the glory of his faithfulneſs. We find *David*, *Pſalm* 89: 1. thus ſpeak, as one preſſed upon ſuch a duty; and though ſome have a more ſpecial call and greater advantage to this then others, yet we may ſay, the confirming, and ſealing of the truth, is like a great and publick treaſure, wherein the meaneſt Chriſtian wants not acceſs to caſt in his mite. Now for further clearing this. what the Chriſtian's ſeal and atteſtation of the truth means, and what acceſs or advantage he hath for acquitting himſelf of ſuch a debt, I would point a little at, in theſe few particulars.

Firſt, It is clear that he who believes and receives the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt, does thus ſet to his ſeal, that he is true, and ſubſcrives, as it were the truth, and doctrine of the Goſpel, *Iohn* 3: *ver.* 33. 2. It is alſo clear, the ſhewing forth of the power of godlineſs, and the virtues of him who hath called him, is through the tract of a Chriſtian's life, a living and viſible witneſs thereto. 3. We may judge the converted man upon that new and marvellous diſcovery, he hath got of the truth, upon his firſt entering into a Chriſtian ſtate, when he hath paſt that great ſtep, and as one come into another World, hath then a ſpecial call, and advantage for ſuch a duty, that if it were asked, what is the firſt ſervice ſuch owes to the truth? Is it not even this to commend by his ſeal and teſtimony to others, what God hath ſo marvellouſly commended to his ſoul? And thus needs not want acceſs to let the World know, who

may wonder at such a change, that though once he was blind, he does now see, and assuredly knows the truth is the power of God to salvation, which he no more believes upon the report and testimony of others, since now he sees it with his own eyes. He then is to answere that call, *Luk.* 22. *When you are converted strengthen your brethren.* 4. When a Christian is confirmed, upon some remarkable faint and staggering, and hath got a new seal of the faithfulness of God, is he not under some new debt, to restore, with advantage, what he had taken from the credite of the truth, and give that good report, and witness thereto, which may obviat any reflection he might have caused by his faint: Sure it is the Christian's testimony hath then this special advantage, to confirme others in the way of the Lord, that his former fears, and shakings have been so discernable; thus we see *Hezekiah*, after such a remarkable plunge and fainting, comes in with his witness, *Isai.* 38: *ver.* 15, *What shall* I *say, he hath both spoken, and himself also hath done it, &c.* And *David*, *Psalm* 31: *ver.* 22. How concerned was he in such a duty, I *said* I *am cast out of thy sight, Yet thou heardest the voice of my supplication.* 5. When we see Atheism much abound, and hath a publick appearance, when it is not a particular truth, but the truth and faithfulness of God is callenged, we may judge, it then cals, and cals aloud, to the godly man, for his appearance, even by some more obvious testimony, then at other times, to so great an interest; sure it is, when the lot of a Christian is in such a time cast, and amongst a generation of mockers, he will not want access, and a special call, by a christianly grave, and prudent witness, to own the truth, as that which he is obliged to seal, though

there

there were none elſe; yea we may think, this ſhould be a call and incitement, where zeal for Jeſus Chriſt hath got a command over his ſoul, as might burſt his tongue ſtrings, which before were tyed, when the faitfulneſs of his God, which he ſo oft hath proven, is by men brought in queſtion, which, to *David*, was like a ſword that thruſt him through, and an upcaſt he could not bear, when they ſaid unto him, *where is your God?* 6. Upon the cloſe of ſome ſharp and remarkable trial, when the Chriſtian, after a ſtorme, comes ſafe to land, ſuch a new diſcovery he hath of the truth, and faithfulneſs of God, layes then a new debt on him, to bear witneſs thereto. Is he not thus concerned not to leave the croſs of Jeſus Chriſt, at a loſs, which hath left him at ſo great an advantage, or part therewith, without ſuch a teſtimony, that may endear the way of the Lord to others: Thus afflicted *Job*, after a long continued ſtorme, comes in the cloſe to pay the truths rent by his ſeal and teſtimony thereto. *Job.* 42. *I have heard of thee, &c.* I hope this debt, in a large meaſure, ſhall be yet found on many of this Generation, when this ſtorme is over to preſs their ſpirits for bearing ſuch a teſtimony, that they thirſted not when he led them through the deſerts, But have oft there been ſurpriſed with his immediat help to aſtonishment, *Iſay.* 48. 21. 7. Is not the experience of a Chriſtian, and theſe grave remarks he hath of the faithfulneſs of God, a ſpecial truſt put in his hand, and a piece of his talent, that cals for his ſeal, as a rent which ſuch ow to the truth, and ſhould have ſome further reach, then his own perſonal eſtablishment. I muſt ſay as to this, none of the ſaints want their peculiar ingagements, vvhich they may judge are upon them, even beyond others;

yea ſuch ſingular confirmations they have had of the way of the Lord, and oft vvith theſe aſtonishing circumſtances, that to ſmother, without ſome gain and advantage thence payed in to the truth, might be reckoned a ſtealth from the generation, We may judge ſuch a thing preſſed *David's* ſoul for a vent; *Pſalm* 66: 16. and truely, ſomething of this practice, managed with humble prudence, in a grave intercourſe and communication of ſome ſpecial confirmations of the truth, were a choice improvement of Chriſtian Society and fellowship. I confeſs. to manage this well, ſeems one of the moſt difficult pieces of duty a Chriſtian owes to others, & I humbly judge may be miſtaken, in its chief end, by too much dwelling ſomtimes on the caſes of a Chriſtian, and debating theſe, to which their light and judgement may give more ariſe, then a preſent preſſure, and weight of the ſame; the multiplying of which I have oft looked on as a darkening the ſolid and plain way of Godlineſs, and making it perplex and thornie, which lyes in little bounds, when well underſtood: But we ſee, what a ſpecial improvement of Chriſtian fellowship is held forth, *Mal.* 3: *ver.* 16. for their mutual joy, and eſtabliſhment in the truth, in a time when it was in queſtion, what advantage there is to ſerve the Lord? I ſhould wish ſo excellent a mean were more directed to this end: Nor should this mar ſuch a duty that there may be an empty show and counterfit of that alſo, and the ſhalloweſt brooks ſomtime make the greateſt noiſe. 8. Here is a ſpecial call for the Chriſtian's ſeal & witneſs to the truth, under ſome remarkable exigence and ſtrait, whileſt throng'd with manifold temptations, then is he concerned by his appearance, to ſhew forth the faithfulneſs of God, and

and his testimony thereto, that may let others know, who in such times will be great observers of his way, that he is satisfyed with God, and with the security of his word, to rest on, when he hath no resting place els where; that he thinks not his burden too great to roll over on the promise; but hath this to say, in behalf of the truth, *Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, yet not destroyed.* You may see the Apostle paying such a debt on this account, *Having nothing I possess all things.* 2 Cor. 6: 10. lastly, I must say, a call to this duty, waits the Christian, in a special manner, at the close of his day, then, O then, is he concerned, to acquit himself of that debt, by commending the way of the Lord, and confirming others therein. Would it not be a choice appendix to the Testament, and latter will of a dying Christian, to seal with his last breath the faithfulness of God, and then when his words are of more weight then at other times, bear this witness, that through the various steps of his life, he knows God is true, and hitherto hath helped. It is sure, the present day hath its duty, and each remarkable time of ones life, hath some proper work: But this, I must say, seems to fall in, as the last service of a dying Christian to his generation, to deliver the truth off his hand, which he had received, and oft proven, with his seal, and testimony thereto: This were to bequeath a choice legacy to others.

It is not here understood, that particular rules can be given for the practice of this duty, but Christian wisdom is profitable to direct, as occasion offers, and the present case circumstantiat; but sure it is, each Christian is thus a witnes and as it were judicially sisted in behalf of that Attribut of the faithfulnes of God, to attest by his seal as a confirmatory sign thereof, that God

God is true; and as there is an implicit seal by believing, there is something more explicit then called for, in times which seem to evacuat the promise, when the reality of godlines is so expresly impugned by the adversary as fanaticism; and these things I shall further adde; 1. That through the whole Scripture, we see in frequent instances, how much the saints have been thus taken up, and in these times of the Church, when there was not such access an other way, to keep up a remembrance of the faithfulnes of God, and transmit a testimony thereto, we finde a pillar and stone of witnes erected as. *Sam:* 7. 12. 2. Thus hath the Christian access, in the returns of thankfulnes to God, no mercy being so small, on which his faithfulnes is not engraven, as we finde David often, and Jacob, Gen: 32. 10; and sure it is the discovery of this to an observing Christian hath sometimes a greater joy and satisfaction therewith, then the mercy in which it appears; I must say it is a great want in that excellent duty when some testimony to the faithfulnes of God is not carried on therewith. 3. Hath not the Christian an occasional call thereto, when ever this lyes in his way to speak to its credit, and bear his witnes? we may see the truth and faithfulnes of God came never Davids way, but we finde him speak honorably thereof from the sense of his peculiar engagements. 4. There is no piece of a Christians suffering stated on a particular truth, but a confession is therewith called for, of the faithfulnes of God, thus to bear witnes before the world, that he does not offend nor is ashamed of the crosse of Christ, because he knows whom he hath believed; whilst others by chosing sin, rather then affliction, doe what in them lyeth to make God a liar.

Inference

Inference III. From the Scriptures accomplishment, is this, that as there is a personal debt on the Christian, there is a publick debt also on the Church, and a special trust reposed on every age thereof to seal the truth, and deliver that great interest off its hand, to the ages to come, with a witness to the faithfulness of God. The Scripture herein is clear, yea, we have it in an express prophesy held forth *Psalm.* 145. *ver.* 4.5.6. that one generation, in a continued series, should seal the truth to another and thus carry forward a witness to the same: For each time hath some peculiar rent, which it should pay to the posterity, from a new addition of the great and remarkable works of the Lord; and it is sure, the greater things he hath witnessed, by his more eminent appearance for the Church, in one age beyond another, does adde to this debt, and puts some further ingagements upon it, to record & transmit the works of the Lord, and the memory of his goodness to after times. Now with respect to this grave truth, I would offer a few particulars (which, this day, we may sadly regrate, are so much wanting) wherein something of this debt, that one age of the Church owes to another, in behalf to the truth, may appear.

1. It may be judged a debt on the Church to the posterity, to pursue that great interest of the truth by an adding further, for confirming of the faith of the saints therein, from that discovery, and peculiar advantages the present time affords; & thus effectually endeavour to advance the repute and credite of the truth, on solid demonstrative grounds of its certainty. This hath the greater call, when it is so much the work of the time, and of not a few labouring therein to shake & unsettle men, as to this great foundation, yea so much writen that hath a visible tendency to this end. One thing

thing particularly should be wished, that the publick records of every age as they concern the Church, did carry therewith, more clearly, some history of the verification of the truth, by transmitting these great & conspicuous remarks of the way of God with the Church, to the posterity, by which the Scripture then hath been signally confirmed: thus should one age declare its faithfulness to the next, which were a choice piece of service, being gravely, and with caution managed.

2. This debt does the Church owe to the posterity, with respect to the truth, to endeavour its transmitting purely, and without hurt and prejudice; for it is to the Church the Oracles of God are committed, and for that great trust, must she in every time be responsable: but as to this, I must say, that piece of the truth of God, which is more sharply assaulted, and hath endured greatest opposition from the adverse party, makes this debt the greater, to deliver that off her hand, with all care and circumspection, yea with some peculiar testimony thereto. It is true, there want not in every age some to appear upon the truths interest; yea, it is a duty lyes at each Christian's door, when called to give a confession of the same; but as no private appearance can answere to a publick record and monument, it is thence clear in a time of great incroachment on the truth, when a remarkable breach is like to be made, and the assault not from a private adversary, but a publick formidable combination of a party, some more solemn, authoritative, and unite concurrence is then called for, in the Churches testimony, for her exoneration, that, with such an advantage, may witness to the ages to come, whereat their fathers left, how they held out and wrestled to keep their ground, in defence of the gospel

pel; this we may say, is like the casting up of a bank, to guard against a further breach, when the enemy comes in like a flood: and it is known, the confessions of the Church in every age, with such a publick testimony to the truth, whilest followed with visible hazard and suffering, have been more effectually subservient to the truths conservation, then all the disputs of men; thus did they overcome, *Rev.* 12. 7. by the bloud of the lamb, and the word of their testimony.

3. This special debt also is upon the Church, with a respect to the posterity, to contend for the truth once delivered to the Saints, and but once, since it can admit no change or alteration to the second comming of the Lord. O how blessed a debate and strife this is, though in such an interest resisting to the bloud should be called for: But whilest I mention this duty, it cannot be understood, with respect to that great interest of Religion only, or the weightier matters of the Law, that are more fundamental, whilest under a professed zeal to these, a latitude and indifferency in other concernments of the truth is sheltered. It is indeed strange, though no strange thing, in this time. But let me ask, can a piece of truth, held forth in the Scripture, be of that low value, to warrand the quiting, or yeelding up of it when brought in debate, when one line of this, is of more inestimable worth, then the crowns and scepters of all the Monarchs of the earth? Sure it is, the God of truth hath prized it at another rate, who declares heaven and earth should rather fall, or one title of his word perish; and can these in greater things be faithful, who are not thus in a little? It is too clearly seen, how small a yeelding makes a great breach. Truths comparatively small, may be great in their season

ſeaſon, when they are the word of his patience; yea, we may ſay the leſſer it ſeems, and of meen value with many, it makes the Chriſtian's adherence thereto a greater teſtimony. It is clear, what a cloſs concatenation there is amongſt the truths of God, held forth in the Scripture that one part thereof cannot be reached, without a ſpecial prejudice to the whole; yea, it may be ſaid, every corruption of the truth hath an aime at the very ſoul of Religion, by a direct tendency thereto.

4. It is a great duty the Church owes the poſterity, for which this day, there ſeems a more then ordinary call to ſtudy the tranſmitting of truth, and godlineſs, not in a naked forme only, but in the life and power thereof. Sure it is now too obvious, which gives ground both for grief and aſtonishment, that through a large part of the reformed Church, and in theſe places, where ſometime the truth hath brightly ſhined with much ſtate and warmneſs; yea, where religion, in its purity, is yet profeſſedly countenanced, and the worship of God owned, even there we may ſee the power and ſpirituality of this, is a ſtrange and unknown thing, that by many within the Church, and of ſome repute therein, it might be queſtioned, is there indeed a Holy Ghoſt, and an inward teaching of the Spirit, which by its working and efficacious influences, is known upon the ſoul? Or, is there ſuch a thing as real fellowſhip and converſe with God, in the ſecret, and more publick duties of a Chriſtian, that is aſſuredly found? Oh what cauſe is there to fear the ſhadow and forme be quickly gone, when the power thereof, is ſo great a myſtery. I know it is a ſore challenge, and may ſeem ſtrange to ſome. I do here profeſs it is not to reflect on any place, or particular Church by another, But we may

ſay

ſay this want and decay is too great and univerſal to be hid; and now the tide ſeems ſo far ſpent and gone back, yea a ſmall appearance of its returne; and the Church of Chriſt at that paſs, that if the faithfulneſs of God were not ſurety, which ſtands good for all, we might upon ordinary appearance judge nothing elſe is left, but now to your tents every man, that each one ſhould ſhift for himſelf, and give over the Church: but ſure I am (I bleſs the Lord without debate in this matter) upon a better warrand then appearance, our ſafety is this day to keep by the veſſel, and not part intereſts with an afflicted and almoſt ſinking Church; a publick Spirit may yet be found the choiſeſt way to ſecure a private intereſt. Oh! what do we ſee? is not almoſt every where mens hands upon their loyns, and ſo little inquiry, in that extreme exigence, what piece of duty can yet be eſſayed, to get religion up again, which now is at ſo ſore a backſet: we might hope a great outcoming ſhould be where little is expected, even upon a ſmall ſtirring of duty. Some things, I am ſure, are to be wished, that would be of ſingular uſe to promote this intereſt, which I ſhall very briefly point at.

Firſt, It ſhould be wished this great mean of prayer, yet left to the Church, were with more ſingleneſs and fervency improven, both by the Chriſtian alone, and in converſe with others. This is well known in the moſt dark and diſmal times of her condition, what marvellous help, it hath brought at a choke, when it hath ſeem'd in ſome manner *ultimus conatus eccleſiæ*, and all other things gone. O a ſpirit of prayer, what advantage hath remarkably followed upon this, to fetch the wind, yea to get the veſſel as it were put aſloot when it hath been a low ebb

with the Church, to hasten her delivery; and in the mean time keep her wounds bleeding, before the Lord; we may say, thus hath the meanest of the Saints access to do a great piece of service, even to the Church universal, and the recovery again of the power of Godliness, that is now so far gone.

2. With respect to this, it is to be wished, that a greater correspondence through the reformed Church were more effectually pursued, to know others case, what eminent hazard appears to the truth, or sore trial and assault that some particular Church may have beyond others, for witnessing mutual sympathy, for communication of counsels, the obviating prejudices and mistakes, a grave incitement and upstirring of others, to the duty of the time, and thus a further concurrence endeavoured, in promoting the great interest of the gospel. Oh sad, that since the reformation brake up, how little of this hath been practised, but now much more gone, that except by ordinary travellers, or sometime publick Gazets the great concernments of the nighbouring Churches, and the more remarkable occurrents of providence therein are but little known. I should account it a token for good, if something of a publick Spirit, with respect to such a mean, did more appear. We know not what advantage might follow this essay.

3. This should be wished, and might be a notable and useful help, yea of no great difficulty, now whilest there is such plodding in Religion, by airy notions, as if that great interest were the essay of mens wit and invention, to study the turning over of some of our choise English pieces, in other languages, which do most nervously hold forth the truth of godliness, both in its simplicity, and in the life and power thereof. Such as are most fit to put men on an other

other sent, for bringing the naked speculation of truth down to that more near feeling, and absolutely necessary soul-converse therewith, yea such as with greatest clearness, might shew the world something of the inestimable advantage of that excellent study, how well godliness suites, and is a singular help in every calling and condition of men, to make their way easy and pleasant, amidst the plunges of their life: but especially, that may hold forth the indispensable necessity thereof. It is sad to think in what a measure excellent holiness is wounded, and darkened by so great a cloud of prejudice, almost through the reformed Church, which is much pretended, upon the extravagance and unsuitable practice of many professing the same, and yet so little care to obviat and prevent this.

4. I must further adde what, I am sure, is to be wished, when so smal ground seems of hope therein, and cals now for much prayer, to see a spiritual and faithful ministery, given to the Church, of whom it might be said, these are the Ambassadours of Jesus Christ, with their Master's authority, impressed on them; who in earnest do travel in birth, to have Christ formed in their hearers, and preach with a feeling of that they speake, to themselves, as well as others, such who truely watch for mens souls, with an awfull impression of that, lest their bloud be required at their hands. How great a blessing should this be to a decayed Church, and what a ground of hope were it of a recovery, for its seen and clearly witnessed, that connexion which is betwixt the Churches case, and the ministery thereof. Was it not seen at the breaking up of the Gospel, and the marvellous success it had in the beginning of the reformation after that long darkness under Antichrist,

his reign; how choice and excellent a miniſtery was then ſent forth; yea what a remarkable conſtellation of great lights did appear, who did both burne and ſhine in their time. Oh! Theſe are gone, and but a few comparatively with that time of ſuch a ſpirit to be found: but this ſad remark we cannot ſhunne, that the greateſt plague the chriſtian world and much of the reformed Church, this day, is under, is from the watchmen, by whom the truth, in its power hath been more wounded, then its moſt profeſſed adverſaries. I know there wants not ſuch a horrid partie in this time, who take advantage to reflect on and decrie that excellent office and appointment of Jeſus Chriſt for his Church, becauſe of the abuſe thereof, whom I dare not from the aw of God, anſwere in their dialect which is only railing, and is all their ſtrength: but the Lord rebuke that evil ſpirit, now abroad in the world. Whileſt I ſpeak to that great advantage the Church and the power of religion hath by a faithfull miniſtery, I muſt further adde this, as a debt the preſent generation owes to the poſterity, to witneſs a particular care and reſpect to ſuch who are looking forth with ſome aime to this great calling, that in ſo ſadning a day theſe might be incouraged and ſtirred up (I mean where there is ſome promiſing appearance) to follow their look and not faint when difficulties ſeem to grow in their way, and the ſickle now taken out of the hand of many faithfull labourers, but eſpecially for their taking alongs, with other ſtudies that more exellent ſtudy, ſanctification, which is ſo indiſpenſably neceſſary to make able miniſters of the New Teſtament. Sure theſe have now a ſpeciall advantage to witneſſe their love and reſpect to Jeſus Chriſt, who keeps their face that way forward, when there ſeems no other incitement but the ſervice

of

of such a master, they may have a meen appearance and at this day conflict with many difficulties, on whom great service may yet wait for the Church of Christ.

Inference IV. It is a duety of special use with respect to a right understanding and distinct uptaking of the fulfilling of the Scripture, *to discern the times and enquire seriously thereanent*; since it is clear, that in particular ages and periods of time, the Scripture must take place, and the Prophecies thereof which relate to each period of time have their particular and exact accomplishment therein. It is sure this can be no matter of debate that such a duty is called for, in so dark an houre upon the Church, yea the greater the darknes growes, it seems to have a more pressing call; when we see the clouds gathering, that they are like to cover the face of the skie: the Church universal so sore benighted, that she hath almost lost her way amidst these mists and among the multitude of these bypaths, for then it is not only incumbent to the publick watchmen, but we may say, concerns the godly every where to be on this accompt seers, to know the time, and what Israel ought to do: sure it is, no Christian wants his watchtower, where he may get up, by a near converse with God in the Scripture, and thence as from a great height consider the present time, yea have a clear view of the most strange perplexing occurrents thereof, how amidst these, his worke about the Church, keeps its way, and moves still fordward, without losing of ground; and his truth does convincingly take place.

Now with respect to this, I shall here offer some thoughts, what in so necessary a duty, concerns the godly; and calls for their serious enquiry, for a

right discovery and understanding of the time, and shall shorty touch it in a few particulars.

First, It is of great import to know from the Scripture, what of the night it is, how far it seems to be spent, and now in what watch thereof the Church is fallen, as to her present state; for thus we might know to what period of her condition, these great and remarkable things which fall out in the World do relate; This, I confess, should be a perplex busines, if the appearance of things were our guide, and wanted that blessed conduct of the written word, when the Churches way seems involved in so strange a labyrinth, one thing is sure, that the Lord hath founded Zion, and is now building her up: which marvellous work cannot halt, but in all ages is in a continued progress, wherein the great builder, doth lose no time; and from the Scripture these things seem clear and manifest.

1. That as the whole election must obtaine, so now are there a great many of that elect Church already entered into a triumphant condition and are now got safe on shoar, there is this day a great and innumerable company of all Nations, Tongues and Languages, who were of old committed to the Mediators trust, and to be brought forth under the times of the New Testament, perfected and before the throne, after whom the Gospel did follow, and made many a long step to bring in from the furthest corners of the earth.

2. This also is clear, that the Church militant hath now past, and is gone through, that long continued, and most dismal trial, which under the times of the Gospel, until the close of time was to go over her head, even that sore bondage from Antichrist and under

under his reign; it is true this adversary does not cease, nor give over the quarrel, for he wants not wrath, when his power is abated; and this day we see him in a great stir, to have up that accursed interest and set it in its own place, that hath so remarkably been brought down and begun to fall before the Gospel: But a step further of that judgment (which assuredly is not sleeping) will end the business; however this is now manifest, that the Winter is past, and the Churches spring begun, yea in a larg measure advanced, whose growth and tender blossome, the cold, nor storm, cannot blast, but must be subservient thereto, and hasten the summers approach.

3. Upon this enquiry, where the Church now is, and in what, or what maner of time, her present state seems to fall, I think there are clear and convincing symptomes, by which some notable Crisis, in her condition may be discerned, that after many conflicts, and sore wrestling since her victory begun over Antichrist, this time of the Church seems to fall under that more remarkable assault, which may be looked for from this adversary, before the powring out of the fifth vial on his throne and seat; which as the preludium of so great a victory, may in some proportion thereto, be more dreadful and sharp for a time, then any we have seen: I humbly judge the Scripture points clearly at this, which shews the wrestling condition of the Church, and a war continued betwixt Antichrist and the Lamb, even in his falling state, *Rev.* 17; *v.* 14. until that last decision (which is made sure in the Churches favour) put him off the field, *For the Lamb shall overcome, and they who are on his side, who are called chosen and faithful*, and since it is thus, that the Churches interest is advanced, by the renewed assaults of that adversary, should it be

ſtrange that the ſeveral ſteps of her riſing, have ſome conflict and oppoſition proportioned thereto? muſt ſhe not be in pain and labour, as a woman in travel, for her bringing forth, yea do not the ſharpeſt ſhowers both preſage, and haſten the delivery? for this doth the Scripture witnes, which is written for the ages to come, *Micah* 4: *ver.* 13. *Be in pain, O Daughter of Zion, and go forth unto Babylon, for there ſhalt thou be delivered:* I muſt judge, ſo formidable an approach of Antichriſt this day, and the advantage he ſeems to have, with theſe ſore ſtruglings of the Church of Chriſt, as in an extream betwixt life and death, do more promiſe, then threaten; and are a hopeful preſage of a further enlargement, and the bringing forth ſome great and important truth in its ſeaſon to a performance, yea have a direct tendency under the wonderful conduct of the bleſſed diſpoſer of theſe things, to help forward ſuch a mercy.

4. This we may know from the Scripture, though now it ſeem a contradiction both to ſenſe and reaſon, that the Churches intereſt is on a preſent advance, and at this day on the prevailing hand: It is true under all the changes of her condition, and through the whole time of the New Teſtament, this truth muſt be made out, *Iohn* 3: *ver.* 30. that Jeſus Chriſt in his Kingdom *muſt increaſe*, even when choiſeſt inſtruments wear out, and to appearance in a moſt languiſhing decay; that intereſt doth then flowriſh as the Palmtree, the more it is depreſſed, nor hath the Church bounds ſet to its continued increaſe, until it once come to the perfect day when the Kingdom ſhall be delivered up to the Father, and all powers ſubdued, and brought under the Mediators feet; but this riſe and increaſe of the Church, which is here

here understood, on the falling of Antichrist, I must say, hath a further reach, and is in a more eminent, conspicuous way pointed at in the Scripture, as that which waits on a more solemn, and remarkable period of the Churches state: It is true such houres may fall in, with some sad intervals, in which success and all advantage appears on the adversaries side; for thus we finde the Scripture point forth Antichrists ruin, and the progress of his judgment and downcasting in the various steps thereof, with a special resemblance to the Lords way with Pharaoh; of whom he appears to have been a type, such judicial strokes of induration on both, a gradual procedure by one plague after another, with the same effect and product, to give the Church a new assault, on any favourable interval; until the great God make his power known as once he did at the red Sea. For there we may say, did the Lord first found a national Church, with a special type, of the great works and deliverances he would do for her in after times, and by this represent that marvellous stroke he is to bring on Antichrist. It is not strange to see the truth brought down to the grave, yea as it were buried, when even this thing by the overruling providence of him who maketh all things work together for her good is turned to her advantage, and tends to her rising with a greater lustre and brightnes; who could in an ordinary way judge, the reformed Church, then upon an advance in the French massacre, the Catholick League there, and the Low Countrey persecution by *Alva*, yet these were an antecedent preparation to her further rise, which a little time made appear.

5. This further I shall adde, as to the present time of the Church, which from the Scripture seems clear;

that, that blessed, much longed for, and glorious day of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (which as the last period of the full accomplishment of all that is written will once for all and for ever put a glorious close to the Churches warfare, the souldier's sword and helmet shall then be layd aside, and give place to the victors harpe and crown never to be layd downe againe) hasteth apace, O let him who writeth and him who readeth say even so come Lord Jesus quickly. It is sure that God who hath appointed man his time, & with whom the number of his moneths & years are, hath set time its glass also, & bounded the duration of this world, that it cannot continue one minute more, and though the particular time fals not under our inquiry, which the Majesty of God hath concealed from the Angels; yet is this clear, there are signs given of its near aproach, which in their season will be discernable, though little noticed by the world, it being in such a lethargy, and men then so thronged with the cares of this life that these grave forewarnings will not rouse them up; but it is evident such signs are not given in vain, for there with the Church hath a call to discern wisely what appearance there is of the approach of that day, yea on such an accoumpt to lift up their head with a solemn congratulation; O what a marvelous truth is this, the serious thoughts of which might give men new subject for wonder each day, that the time is hastening, when the redeemer of the Church shall appear in the clouds of heaven, in flaming fire with an innumerable company of the Angels & now the dust of the Saints hath not long to sleep, until they be awaked with that unspeakable sweet and ravishing sound of the last trumpet: faithful is he who hath

hath promised, yea for further assurance, we have a solemn oath thereto, by him who liv's for ever and ever; it is long since John gave this warning to the Church, behold he cometh with clouds; and then did these primitive Christians solace themselvs on that ground; some few evidences of this dayes approach, with a safe warrrant from the Scripture we may discern, which as the blossoming of the spring doth witnes the Summer is now near. 1. If the whole dayes of the Gospel, since that glorious triumph of the Mediator in his suffering for the Church, and his resurrection, be upon the Scriptures reckoning, the last times, we must then judge the night is far spent, and the day at hand; 2. If in the dayes of the seventh trumpet the mystery of God shall be finished, is not this clear that two ages are almost past since it begun to blow, under which the intereſt of the gospel hath a most remarkable advance; 3. If the last stroke and utter abolishing of Antichrist, shall be by the brightnes of Christs second coming 2 Thes: 2. 8. is there not solid ground thence to judge this blessed day hasteth when his falling is so far advanced, it is sure we have seen his Kingdom in a great measure darkened, his consuming and mouldering down by the breath of Christs mouth in the preached gospel; and now wait in hop, for that more remarkable step of his judgment, which the Scripture, I think giv's as a near sign of the coming of the Lord even such as the white skie, and morning brightnes, is to the watchman of the dayes being near; and thus as wee see the ruin and downfal of the man of sin advance, there seems to be a proportional ground of certainty thence to conclude the neer approach of the day of Christ's second coming.

Second,

Second particular, which in our discerning the time cals for a serious enquiry is this, *what the present appearance, and signs of the time seem to point at*, for these as the pulse to the body, are of special use to give a clear discovery of its temper, and dispostion, but this is a prognostication that goeth above the stars and all the rules of Astrology, which the Scripture only can make us know, I confess this day they seem sad, and every where look with a threatning aspect on the Church, we see not now our signs, and these tokens for good, which sometimes have appeared; but there are presages, if we could gravely look thereon, that might cause us with astonishment enquire, what can such things portend, and when will be the end of these wonders? Some few I shal breifly point at, which concern this time, that if we be not much asleep might be very rousing and make us regard the same with an awful, & humbling impression, for they truly threaten; yet I must say with a reference to the Scripture & upon an inquiry into that unerring record anent their meaning, first that we have a safe warrant from them to conclude that whatever may befal a particular Church, yet nothing thence can be concluded as demonstrative of a mortal prejudice to the Church universal; for though this or that particular Church may be cut off and spued out of his mouth (as many have and most of the particular Churches may this day meditat terror *if he spared not the natural branches take heed lest he also spare not thee* should sound an alarme to each Church, these very things with highly aggravating circumstances being too obvious and easy to be found with them for which he cast others off) yet he must encrease and his Kingdome must be a coming Kingdome, yea when he seems to lose ground in one place of the world it is made up with advantage by the enlarge-

largement of the ſame in another place, and often out of the very ruines and diſſipation of that Church which he caſts off he carries materials to build him an houſe elſwhere: in which caſe we are inſtead of a querulous ſaying, why is it thus? to adore and bleſſe the glory of the Lord from his place, to juſtify his procedure and be glade that they to whom he was not ſpoken of ſhall ſee and they who had not heard ſhall underſtand. ſecondly we may alſo ſay with the ſame warrant, that even a particular Church which hath very death preſaging ſymptoms and ſcarce a token for good can by him who healeth backſlidings and loveth freely be recovered, he can make dry bones to flowriſh as a green herb, for the iſſues from ſpiritual death belongs to him, he can make them who had fallen from their firſt love repent and doe the firſt works, whereby the departing of the glory and the removing of the candleſtick out of his place ſhall be prevented. I am ſo much the more preſſed to touch this a little, becauſe the very few ſerious who are yet left or delivered from that ſpiritual ſopor and ſtupidity which hath ſeiſed on others, while they lay to heart the things which coucerne the Kingdome of Jeſus Chriſt, are, upon the frightful aſpect of affairs and on the conſideration of what they obſerve in the temper of men and tendency of things, ready to caſt away all confidence and abandon themſelves to a ſimple deſpondency, they almoſt queſtion, whether they ought to entertain any hope that we ſhall any more be called by that bleſſed name Jehovah Shammah the Lord is there, ſeing nothing appeares at preſent in the diſpoſition of men or diſpenſation of God which doth not ſeeme to portend a final departure. Notwithſtanding whereof I would deſire ſuch as to beware leſt in their heartleſ-

neſſe

neſſe they limit the holy one of Iſrael and circumſcribe the ſovereignity of grace within its juſt latitude and limits, ſo for their eſtabliſhment againſt ſuch a deſpondency and for their excitment to a ſerious wreſtling with him in order to his aboad with us to conſider theſe particulars.

Firſt, We may cal this one of the ſigns and preſages of the time, that the devil is now ſo much aloft, and in a ſtrange way beſtirring himſelf againſt the Church, to beget every where a prejudice at the truth, which this day, by very remarkable effects of his power, may be ſeen: 1. It is ſure he is a bad neighbour, yet we muſt ſay he endangers the Church moſt, when becauſe he makes no great noiſe he is leaſt diſcerned; his being apparently quiet and ſtill hath been found in experience more fatal to the flouriſhing and real ſucceſſe of the goſpel then his rage, and in his ſimulat flight more prevalent then in his more furious aſſaults, but we have the Scripture to ask concerning this, which makes theſe clear, 1. That his appearing with great wrath ſhews his time to be ſhort, and that it will be no continued or lying ſtorm. *Rev.* 12. 12. 2. We thence know, his being let looſe with a more then uſuall liberty to trouble the Church, is previous to ſome great and remarkable reſtraint; which you may read. *Rev.* 20. 7. 8. where he is in a more ſpecial way let looſe, but we find v. 10. his being chained up for ever followes. 3. We may clearly ſee from the Scripture the devil much aloft, with a more remarkable ſtir and noiſe, when ſome great thing from the Lord is to be brought forth for the Church. When the ſet time, that ſolemne and bleſſed time was now come of compleating by that one ſacrifice for ever the work of redemption, ſo that this hour and power of darkeneſſe

did

did introduce an everlasting sunshine upon the Church, and Satan by pursuing the Prince of life unto the death had a most fatal overthrow, for by death he overcame him who had the power of death that is the devil, and by being lifted up upon the crosse he spoiled principalities and powers triumphing openly over them, and thus dying sung the victory and said, it is finished, whereby a victory over all enemies is eternally ensured to the saints: yea is it not clear, what an hot alarm the Church may expect from him, upon the approach of that great victory and the decision of the last battel betwixt Michael and the dragon, see *Rev.* 20. 9. 10. what an appearance he will then have, and in what a manner will he bestir himself.

2. Is not this a present sign of the time, about which we may with some astonishment enquire what it doth mean, and if it hath any favourable aspect on the Churches, that we see almost every where the most unit and formidable assault of the adversaries of the truth, and its special aim at the kingly power and Supremacy of the Mediator, as Head over his Church; at which great truth the opposition of this time seems most directly to be levelled, yea we may say, the Crown of Christ which becoms him alone to wear, and this piece of his glory is now betwixt Antichrist, and the Princes of the Earth divided, each contending for his share: Sure this is too discernable and at present the adversary seems to prevail, even to a beating down and bringing under of that great interest of our blessed Master; but it is as sure there is no ground to fear this, being well understood, which is a most hopeful and promising sign to the Church; for we must thus reason from the Scripture, if Christ must reign until all his enemies be brought in subjection, it

is then sure the greater the opposition and assault be, the victory must be the greater, and if that be not only prayed for, but a clear prophecy, *That Jesus Christ will take unto himself his great Power and Reing*: Must we not then expect he will take it, yea in a more eminent and conspicuous manner, when men are seeking in the height of their rebellion and rage against the Lord and his anointed to seise on his Scepter and snatch it from him, and if this also be sure, and in the volumn of that record of the Scripture written concerning him, that his Crown must flowrish on his owne Head, shall not then his enemies be cloathed with shame? Yea hath not this truth a dreadful aspect on the crown and Scepters of many princes who would rob the mediator of his?

3. Is it not a strange presage, and sign of the time, that we now see most hopeful and promising appearances for the Churches good, remarkably blasted, things which in an ordinary way looked to be grounds of encouragement, made to fail, we see human props almost every where removed, or broken, the truth deserted by great men, yea the families of such falling off this day from the Lord, whose ancestors for a long time had been zealous for his interest: I confesse this is a threatning appearance, by which many now seem to be shaken, but I would humbly reason on Scripture grounds, that it is no bad sign, but hath therewith some comfortable aspect on the Church; it being clear. 1. That such a connexion is no strange thing in the bible, betwixt an extream exigence of the Churches case, and the Lords eminent appearing for her outgate, see Isay 30.18.&63.5. Isa: 51.20.21.22. Yea I must say it is hard to finde any great mercy, and remarkable deliverance of the Church, but hath at some such backset trysted her,

2. Is

2. Is not ſuch a diſadvantage & forſaken caſe expreſly held forth as one of graces opportunities of doing good to his people; read. *Ier.* 30: *ver.* 14. 15, *&c.* and you will ſee it; that when none is to plead her cauſe, no healer, and Zion called an outcaſt which no man ſeeketh after; thence does the Lord allow his people to be incouraged and to take it as a ground of hope, he will by his own immediat hand appear. 3. Is it not from the word clear, that a people at ſuch a diſadvantage, and under moſt viſible weaknes when in Gods way, may be then made uſe of, for greateſt ſervice; they were in as ſore diſtreſs of whom *Heb.* 11. 34, it is written, out of weaknes were made ſtrong, &c. I ſhall further adde, can there be cauſe from the withdrawing of humane help, and probable means of ſafety to fear the Churches ruin, when it fals under his hand; who by things moſt deſtructive can ſerve his intereſt, and bring ſalvation at ſuch a time, when none but God could ſave, and why are theſe wonderful providences, that ſo oft have met the Church in a forſaken caſe, written before us in the Scripture; is it not for after times, to witnes to the poſterity how the Church may be caſt down, but not deſtroyed, and though ſhe fall, ſhe cannot ly ſtill, but muſt ariſe *Hoſea.* 6. 1. 2, 3. Nor have her adverſaries any cauſe of triumph thence. *Mica.* 7. v 8. 9. 10.

4. As to the preſent appearance of the time, is not this a threatning ſign, which hath a very dreadful aſpect on the Church; even that diſcernable loſſe and diſadvantage, the beſt now ſeem to be at in their frame & that under a growing trial of the Church, and the great diſtemper many of theſe appear to be in, whilſt we may ſee much of that holy fear, and tenderneſſe, that did formerly ſhew it ſelf amongſt the godly gone, corruption aloft, prejudice eaſily taken, a Spirit of jealou-

powred out, yea very ſtrange and unuſual outbreakings in offence and ſcandal, and oh, is there not here cauſe of fear, that the righteous God be on a further departure from his people, and that his judgment ſhall yet more hotly purſue ſuch, until he have conſumed this generation? On which account if he ſhould make us a generation of his wrath we are called to adore, and juſtify the unſpotted way of the Lord; yet even as to this, I muſt adventure with reſpect to ſoveraignity of grace (which is only like itſelf, and infinitly above our thoughts) to offer ſome diſcovery from the Scripture of what he hath done in like caſes: How marvellouſly hath the gracious and long ſuffering God interpoſed, and at ſuch a ſore backſet helped his Church? For it is clear, 1. That when the Church hath had no argument to make uſe of, no confidence to plead, but broken and confounded, under the ſenſe of horrid guilt, he finds one in himſelf, *Iſai.* 48: *ver.* 9. *For my names ſake will I defer my anger, &c.* 2. We finde the Covenant made uſe of by the Lord, to ſiſt a judicial procedure againſt his people, *Pſal.* 106: *ver.* 44. *Nevertheleſs he regarded their affliction when he heard their cry and remembred for them his Covenant.* 3. We finde the rage and violence of the adverſary, and their taking advantage to blaſpheme, made uſe of as an argument by him, to owne his people, who had otherwiſe forfaulted all the former grounds of confidence, *Deut.* 32: *ver.* 26. 4. We may read how ſoveraigne grace, hath thus marvellouſly ſtepped in, when the rod did not humble, and ſmiting would not do the turne; *I ſmote them, and they went on frowardly in the way of their heart, Iſai.* 57: *ver.* 17. Yet, ſayes the Lord, *I will* not thus quit them, there is one cure for all, *I have ſeen their wayes, and will heal them*; Such a diſcovery

alſo

alſo have we thereof, when a peoples ruin is of themſelves, and iniquity hath brought them low, *Hoſ.* 13: *ver.* 9. *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf; but in me is thy help:* yea hath not grace refcued theſe on whom their mercy muſt be forced and while on a hot chaſe in departing from God, *Hoſ.* 2: *ver.* 7, 9 5. Have we not this choice diſcovery of the Lords. way with his people held forth in the Scripture, that whilſt he works all their works for them, *He will work theſe in them alſo, Iſai.* 26: *ver.* 12. I ſhall adde, thus hath the freedom of grace, O marvellous grace! ſhined forth in former ages of the Church, but they ſadly miſtake its meaning, who are thus made ſecure and not thereby led unto repentance.

5. This looks like one of the ſigns of our time, that there is a great wearing out of the godly, yea the choice thereof, even by a more then uſual diſpatch; and is not this a ſad Scripture preſage of evil coming, when ſuch are (as it were) haſtened away that they may be hid in the grave, from a further ſtorm? Yet theſe things ſeem clear alſo. 1. Conſider what a remarkable conſumption did almoſt wear out the Church in the wilderneſs, whilſt even then there was a haſtening of her after enlargement; and though a ſore judgement yet the Churches mercy in a greater upmaking of that loſs was helped fordward; yea we finde *Moſes* and *Aaron* with many of theſe, who had been moſt eminent inſtruments, in Iſraels coming forth out of Egypt, taken away on a near approach of their entrie into Canaan. 2. It is ſure ſome of the greateſt promiſes of the Scripture, waits on the Church, when brought to a very ſmall remnant, *Ezek.* 6: *ver.* 8, 9. *Iſai.* 37: *ver.* 31. 3. Hath not the Lord ſaid in ſuch a caſe, *The conſumption determined ſhall overflow with righteouſnes?* *Iſai.* 10: *ver.* 20. That the next tide

can bring in as many with a marvellous increase, as these former consuming strokes had taken away; yea is it not seen with a wearing out of the godly, and a declining of religion, in one part of the World or of a countrey where many have been called, that it doth breake up remarkably in an other, and thus the Gospel recovers that interest, which it seemed to have lost.

6, Does not the present appearance of the time, threaten by very unusual signs and presages, some sharp storm to come now upon the World, which in many instances we may discern, that there is some remarkable work of judgment to be brought forth, and a great break amongst the nations near, (though the earth seems this day in a strange measure quiet yea so extraordinary a calm now through the World, may it not be a presage of some great storm which as too clear and hot a blinck, foretels a break of the weather.) sure it is there is a sound of great wrath and judgement in the ears of many who know what is to discerne the times It is well the Scripture is neer, a prognostication that can answer all the ages of the Church, and it is there we should enquir, what such a sign does portend, we may not wish the evill day; but on such an appearance of the time, that awful impression *Hab.* 3. 16. is called for, to be in a trembling fram, when God threatens and does thus utter his voice; yet is it clear that from these threatning signs, there is a comfortable sound of much good to the Church, for. 1. We finde days of vengeance on the World, held forth as necessary for the accomplishing of the Scriptnre *Luc.* 21. 22. and made subservient to the bringing forth some special truth thereof unto a performance. 2. We finde in times of greatest judgment, the Churches interest then

set

ſet apart, and ſecured, with a large warrant to the godly, not to fear; even whilſt his garments are dyed with blood; *Iſa.* 63. 1. *Ezek.* 9. 4, *Rev.* 3. 10. 3. May we not ſee alſo the Churches inlargment, and ſome of her greateſt mercies thus ushered in, which is clear. *Iſ:* 63. 4; *Zeph:* 38, and O what a ſtrange connexion is there? That the putting the earth in a flame, and overturning the nations, when the Lord, as a lion does rouſe himſelf up to the prey, ſhould be the very riſe to an accomplishing of ſome great promiſes for the Churches advantage yea and as a preludum to the ſame: yet nothing more evident to ſuch who underſtand the Scripture, and by ſuch a ſign does the Lord ſpeak comfortably to his people, we finde a dreadful Winter ſtorm on the World, pointed out as a ſpring time to the Church, and the trees putting forth their bloſſom, as *Luk.* 21. 25, it is clear her deliverance may be begun, and the ſtorm then breaking, which may for a time put the Church under greater difficulties then before, yea cauſe the godly miſtake, and tremble at the ſight of their mercy, becauſe of theſe things by which it is ushered in even when it is before their eyes. I ſhall adde no more but this, it is our great concernment, to fear him who guids all theſe things, to whom alone the determination of events doth belong; and this is the wiſdom of his people, not to faint at the ſtrange appearance of the time or the ſigns thereof, but to know what is called for, and thence read perſonal duties, from the ſad preſages of publick judgment, and to purſue more nearnes with God, and enſure a retreat under his shadow until the indignation paſs over; *for behold the Lord cometh out of his place to viſit the inhabitants of the earth, and the earth ſhall diſcloſe her blood, and no more cover her ſlain. Iſai.* 26. 21.

A third particular which concerns the godly with much circumſpection to notice and underſtand, in their diſcerning the time, is, the peculiar ſnares and hazards thereof; this is the Scripture character of the wiſe man, to diſcern time and judgment, it being ſo oft verified *Eccleſ.* 9. 12, that in an evil time, the children of men are enſnared, when it fals ſudenly upon them; ſure it is there are ſearching times, when the Chriſtians way is more difficult, and narrow (though each day hath its ſnares, which in a ſpecial way waits thereon) and then is it the wiſdom of the prudent to underſtand his way, and know his ground, which the adverſary by ſubtil and indiſcernable approaches, will ſeek to draw him off; then is a quick, ſagacious diſcerning in the fear of the Lord called for, to have their eyes in their head, and be in a watching poſture, when the net is cloſly ſpread under their feet: it is a ſad remark, too clearly verified oft times on a people profeſſing the truth, which is ſaid of Ephraim, ſtrangers have devoured their ſtrength, and they knew it not, yea their not diſcerning of the ſame, prov's a ſpecial cauſe of their further ruin; and is it not written for the ages to come, in what a ſecure and ſleeping poſture Samſon had his hair cut, he firſt loſt his diſcerning of ſuch a ſnare, ere he loſt his eyes: we finde David through many of the Pſalmes in his wreſtlings with God, more ſolicitous for the preventing the ſnares of wicked men, and a delivery thence, then from their rage and violence: there is a groaping the pulſe of the times by which the preſent diſtemper and hazard of the Church may be known, as well as of the body of man; and I muſt ſay, this day in a ſpecial manner calles us to this grave ſtudy. I intend no further application, but a very short touch at ſome things in general, which rightly

rightly purſued in the godly mans ſerious ſtudy may help to diſcern ſomething of the publick ſnares of the time, and how they get advantage in their aproach, for theſe cloſly wait their ſeaſon, for in vain is the net ſpread in the ſight of the bird.

Firſt, It is clear each time hath its peculiar diſtemper and evils, that have then a ſpecial power and prevalency therewith, the obſerving of which concerns the godly for their more watchful adverting to the ſnares of that time, for then the temptation of the time goes therewith, as the preſent diſtemper diſcovers it ſelf, whither in a hot boiling feaver, or in a dead lethargy, and follows theſe evils, which are in that time moſt contagious, where the current of the multitude runs, which is giving the godly the greateſt aſſault, and ſeem to be warmed under the favourable aſpect, and countenance of great men; yea theſe evils, which promiſe ſome outward advantage, and ſecurity from trouble, when the queſtion is ſtated betwixt ſin, and ſuffering, it is there the preſent ſnare does haunt, and there lyes a ſpecial piece of the godly mans work, to hold off and keep a diſtance from the leaſt acceſſion thereto; yea I may ſay next to the ſalvation of their ſoul, to be ſolicitous al alongſt their way, to have their garments keeped from the ſmaleſt ſtain and ſpot thereof; a touch a ſmal defilement from a publick prevailing evil, being found to draw more deep on the conſcience, and with more difficulty doe men recover, and eſcape thence, then from many other perſonal infirmities.

2. It is alſo clear there is ſome piece of the truth of God in each time of the Church that is more queſtioned and brought in debate, by which with greater advantage and clearnes we may know where a publick

snare doeth ly; for here is its aime directed, to entangle and assault the godly man, where in a special way he is called to his post, to contend for such an interest; and thus it may be said, if one keep sight well of present duty, he will with more facility finde out the sent on which the snare of the time is, how it directs its motion to darken or cast an obstruction in the way of that duety.

3. We may thus discern a prevailing snare, and its getting ground, by that tendency there is in a day of trial, to question and make new inquiry anent duties which were once clear and unquestionable, when their judgment was not byased from any outward incitements; for this speaks mens finding a sad invention, to be rid of their conscience, by extenuating present contraversies; a design which (in the righteous judgment of the Lord) is seldom set on foot by any, but they too visibly thrive therein, for their further ruin, and gets an answer according to the idol of their heart; thus Balam we have in divine record, as a dreadful instance, who tried that way, and therein was succesfull; and is it not a known remark, that a hesitation, and faint upon the heart from want of resolution to suffer for the truth, will not long want a scruple in the head to cause a debate thereanent, and then is it easy for a snare to enter; O with what fear & tendernes should light be reguarded, which as the apple of the eye, may by the least thing be hurt, but is not easily healed: thus is it, men doe insensibly wear out from under these former Impressions they had upon them of duty, and ere they are awar have their judgment by a judicial stroke, determined in that, which was before their desire: they know little, that depth of a mans heart, who are not jealous over

a change

a change on their judgment in an houre of trial when its tendency is, to spare themselves.

4. We may discerne a publick snare in it's approch, by that advantage the adversary gets thereby to divide the godly and these who appeare for the truth, amongst themselves, for then it is easy to enter by such a breach, and throw in the bait in so muddy a water; it being too obvious what an advantage a snare hath, where jealousy with these bitter effects of priyat strif and quarreling turn mens eyes off the publick hazard, and blunts that edge of contending for the truth, in smiting one upon an other; I doe not mean but there may be a necessity oft on the godly to withstand their friends to their face, yea the eminentest in the Church, were it a Peter, Gal. 2. 11. when the truth is concerned; but this should be with greateſt caution and tendernes to obviat a breach, which is like the breaking in of waters, whilst the watching adversary waits his advantage in such a day of their halting; and it is too sadly known, how smal a wedg, that is driven with a tendency to that end, makes way for the entry of a further snare; see. 1 *Cor*: 11. 16, what a sad connexion there is betwixt a dividing time of the Church, and a further departing from the truth; but we must alwayes take head that we so pursue union amongst our selves as that Christ and his cause be not left alone.

5. A present snare may be seen by the sudden change of knowen adversaries, and the friendly insinuations of these who were wont to threaten, that in such an appearance there lyes an ambush, and is but a change of weapons for a seen advantage, sure this should be ground of fear, and a cautious advertence to be much alone with God, that men may know the voice of the shepherd, left they follow after a stranger, it

being more usual, to be stolen off their feet in a calme, then blowen downe by a storm; it is hard to stand before the blandishments of men, where that more endearing, and sweet relish of peace with God is not keeped on the soul, which is a choice mean to make the ear deaf to the most charming voice of the enchanter: oft hath it been seen that adders poison is under their lips, whilst wrath is boiling in their heart *Ps*: 140, yea that the cruel man can change his countenance, when it is fit to lay a snare, and with Joab embrace them in their arms whom they intend to smite under the fifth rib.

6. May not thus a snare be seen in its approach; by that prevalence the fear of man hath over the time, and that unusual command; it seems to have sometimes over the spirits of men, over these whose former zeal and resolution for the truth, hath in other trials with much advantage appeared; here is indeed cause to watch, for in the fear of man there is a snare *Prov.* 29.25. which then will take advantage to pursue, when it finds men in a flying posture, and shrunk so far below their former appearance: we, finde the godly man hath his brest-plat, but he hath no piece of armour for his back, when he turns his face from resisting: it's sad when the adversary is taught to follow, by our fainting, and that spirit which is in the World seems to be upon the ascendent, with a prevalence even over the spirits of the godly; yea these debased, and made contemptible in their eyes, in whom the appearance of God, and his authority upon them, at an other time would have made the hearts of their enemies to have trembled; this is too obvious in a humbling and judicial time of the Church, until once that houre of her trial goe over.

7. A publick snare is then to be feared, and calls for a wat-

a watching eye, by that ſucceſs which waits on a fruitful courſe, eſpecially when ſuch a ſhine is of any continuance, for then new queries will be ſtarted, ſtrange reports ſpread, with much ſubtil reflexion on the way of the Lord, to make the godly queſtion the ſame: David found it not eaſy to ſtand before this, which put him to bring under debate his principles, and the advantage of his cauſe. *Pſ.* 73: 13, and in ſuch a trial doth the adverſary by ſome continued obſervation, know how to aſſault the followers of the truth, and attacke them at their weakeſt, then is it the ſcandal of the croſs cauſeth many offend, for it is ſore for ſuch to ſuffer, who know not the fellowſhip of the croſs of Chriſt, which is a piece of the greateſt and moſt near fellowſhip with him upon the earth; yea then the Church may run more hazard from ſome of her friends, then the profeſſed adverſary, for thus oft is a prevailing ſnare helped forward; it cannot but be a ſearching and hazardous time, when many are turning aſide, and ſome of underſtanding ſuffered to fall, who are ready to preſs their ſin as duety on others, for ſeldom doe ſuch fal off, but are found more ſtiring and active in ſuch a way to ingage others, then they were, while holding their former integrity to purſue the truth's intereſt; thus we have ſeen it, ſo it is, let us hear it and know it for our good.

8. Thus a ſnare of the time may be diſcerned, by the tendency thereof to corruption in the Church, and a producing ſtill the ſame effects, what ever be pretended, when by the handes of Eſau, it diſcovers it ſelf, though it have the voice of Jacob: And doth not the ruin of many who have dashed on ſuch a rock, and have been thus taken; put a ſad mark thereon; for it may be ſaid no ſnare or ſubtil contri-

contrivance of the adversary, waits the godly in the present time, but if men doe not consent to shut their eyes, they may from the Scripture, and observation of the Church, see at others cost, some discernable beacon set thereon, what a sad tendency such a thing hath still had, to a making shipwrack of faith and a good conscience, how hard it is to dance about the fire and not be burned, or stand in the way and counsels of ungodly men, and not be ensnared.

9. It seems to threaten a snare, when enquiry about the duty of the time is pursued without respect to the present case, and circumstances thereof; for thus a snare may wait in a thing at other times indifferent, the neglect whereof upon some special circumstances, may be a quiting their duty; and the doing also, or yeelding to something in an other case warrantable, at some times may fall under a moral prohibition; as this, when a thing in its self indifferent, *Circa sacra et cultum Dei*, is pressed by the Magistrat, as necessary by vertue of his sole command and to the subjecting the godly in things, wherein they are not subject, and to the prejudice of of an other jurisdiction; can there be an enquiry anent this in the general, without a particular application to the complex case, it may be sayd a snare is then on the entry, when that consideration of the Prophet is not much reguarded in the present question, *is this a time for such a thing*; for the disciples to refresh them selves with sleep, was a piece of innocent duty; but that they could not watch this one hour with their Master in his sufferings, must needs vary the case, for it was in so fare a deserting him.

10. I shall further adde, is not this a sad appearance of some publick snare getting advantage which is witnessed by a previous disposition, and that prevalence

lence privat ingagments to an outward intereſt hath upon mens ſpirits, for a ſnare enters not without a call, and finds within, its greateſt ſtrength and advantage; yea a conformity to the World, with an unſenſible wearing out of ſoul-tenderneſſe, is too oft known, to have a tendency for conforming to an evil courſe, for the motion is then down the hill, and there is cauſe to fear the ſnare will follow in there, and ly about that intereſt, which otherwiſe hath got the maſtery over them: How many in embracing the World, have at the next ſtep fallen off from the truth? No weapon hath been more made uſe of againſt the Church, and hath ruined moe, ſo that it may be ſaid, where other ſnares have killed their thouſands this its ten thouſands; I muſt ſay, ſuch an appearance in a time of the Churches trial, is like the breaking forth of her gray hairs, nor is it eaſy for theſe to ſtand, or reſiſt, who are ſo far gone backward, or keep their feet before a ſnare, where the truth ceaſeth to get a command over their heart.

A fourth particular, which calls for a ſerious inquiry, from theſe who know the time, and are wiſe to diſcern the ſame, is this, *what can the righteous doe*, when there is a growing darknes on the Church, and the very foundations like to be ſhaken, yea the hearts of many ſo far downe that they are like to loſe their hand therewith, in the matter of duty, and give over, as men aſtonished, ſeing this evil is from the Lord: It is no ſmal thing, to manage well ſuch a time of the Churches trial, and in ſo ſharp a ſtorme, there is need of much balaſt: but we know the Scripture of God is neer, which ſtands good for his peoples conduct, to let them know how to ſteir their courſe in the darkeſt night, and from that bleſſed record, there is one thing

thing clearly held forth to answer such a time; which is a great duty; *let the righteous hold on his way, and he who hath clean hands wax stronger, and stronger; Job. 17: ver. 9.* For it is sure they have cause and solid ground for this, though the earth should in a more strange manner reel, and the pillars thereof seem to be dissolved; since it is certain and true.

First that all is well, and nothing can fall wrong, whilst the foundation of God, which is his eternal council held forth in the Scripture, abids sure; though other foundations be shaken, the godly man does then ly at a safe anchor, which will not drive in a stormy day, his great interest is beyond hazard, though more then an immortal soul were in that adventure, his heaven is sure, whereof he cannot be beguiled, whilst things upon the earth seem most uncertain; and must it not then be well with the Church, were it even sinking in to the grave, since the Mediator will bring it up again; mens evil eye cannot hurt, nor their cursing blast that interest which God hath blessed, for it is then sure, there is no enchantment against Jacob, or divination against Israel.

2. Is not the truth, and that great interest of godlines, that, to a Christian, and in such a manner known to him, that it needs no testimony from men, or incitement from example of others, for to these it commends itself, and does witnes its reality, though by all the generation amongst whom they live it should be cryed down; it's sure to be a Christian indeed, requires this, to know the truth and be founded on such a ground, that can support and quiet the soul, in the greatest falling off, of others, though none else were to walk in that way; that if it were supposed, one serious Christian in such an age, were in

in the whole World, and thus left alone, there is so great a discovery and certainty of the truth to be known upon the soul, as should oblige him, to such a declaration with *Joshua*, but as for me I will serve the Lord. O to see a generation of men of such mettal who with a resolut peremptorinesse would forsake all men and follow the Lord, and serve him without company, if better might not be vve might by the hand of such expect to be led through Jordan, after our *Moses's* are dead by whom we were led thorow the red Sea, but alas where are they!

3. Have not these ground in the darkest time, to be confirmed, who may see cause to improve the most shaking things, which fall out in their day, for their further establishment, and strengthen their hand in the way of the Lord, by these dispensations at which many stumble: It is strange to observe what a challenge and upcast some have in their reflecting on the truth, on these grounds which in their conscience, they must admit to be a convincing witnes thereto; but having at some length elswhere touched this, I shall but adde these few things more, which as evident grounds of establishment, in the way of the Lord, and for our further strengthing therein should be improved, which yet are an usual challenge by many against the same.

First. That the number seems so small who follow the truth, and are found serious in the study of Godlines, can be no ground to question this, without a strange mistake; since men must either quit the Scripture, or admit, the way to life is strait, and few enter therein: Yea that the small convoy the truth hath in the World is an expresse verification of it: Is

there

there the leaſt warrant to make the ſuffrage of the multitude a teſt of the way of the Lord, but it is ſure we can ſhew them the contrair, that his followers are a ſelect number choſen out of the World, the great bulk whereof is outlawed, and put out of the intercellion of the Mediator, elſe the Scripture could not be fulfilled, and is not the falling of many from the truth a great ſeal thereto, no leſs then the incoming of others, and that excellent way of holynes, the more diſcernably known by ſuch a character, that it is every where ſpoken againſt.

2. That ſo great contempt and reproach does this day attend the truth and practiſe of Godlines, should prejudge none thereat, but be a further ground of ſtrengthening, to help the Chriſtian to hold on his way, ſince it is nothing els but what is foretold, and what the moſt excellent of the earth in their time have met with to be accompted the filth and offſcouring of the World; in no age hath the truth wanted ſuch an aſſault, and in no age hath it wanted a triumph over the ſame: Yea hath not the greateſt reproacher ſometime been forced to give in his retractation, and make earneſt of that, which before he ſcoffed at? When God comes neer by a ſtroke of his judgment, then do the proud change their ſtile and ſpeak in another language upon the awful appearance of death; but this alſo doth witnes, what a marvellous thing Religion is, which with theſe who know it, loſeth no weight, when under the greateſt cloud of detraction, and contempt: For then is Chriſt ſtill pretious and his way deſireable, unto theſe who beleeve.

3. That ſentence is not ſpeedily execut againſt an evil courſe, we ſee what improvement the World makes thereof, to be more deſperatly wicked; but is not this alſo a ſeal and confirmation of the truth, and

and a ground for eſtabliſhment in the way of the Lord, which verifies the Scripture. *Eccleſ.* 8: 11. And it is there men may ſee a ſhort repreival from punishment is no pardon, or acquittance, whilſt ſin runs on to an after accoumpt; that judgment deferred when therewith a further hardening appears, doeth threaten more then a quick and preſent diſpatch, and showes the ſtroke will be the greater when it comes; ſurely if this fell not out, whereof the World takes ſuch advantage, it might in ſo far put us to queſtion the truth, of which one ſillable muſt not fall to the ground.

4. So great an abounding of prophanity and ungodlines within the Church, is it not an undenyable ſeal to the verity of the Scripture, which thus takes place, and should help the godly man to hold on his way, it being unanſwerably clear, there could be no darkneſs if there were not ſuch a thing as light, or folly if there were no wiſdom; and is not excellent holines thus evidently made known in its oppoſit, to which there could be no contrariety, if it ſelf were not moſt real.

5. That the truth ſeems ſo much entangled in a confuſion of contrary doctrins, and we ſee without ceaſing, purſued by error, and the aſſault of theſe adverſaries who in every age are ſeeking to darken the ſame, can be no ground of prejudice, and shaking, without a ſtrange miſtake; but should ſtrengthen the godly in their way, and help them to wax ſtronger, who have the Scripture thus ſo expreſly fulfilled before their eyes; It is ſure the Lord hath made his way plain, nor does that bleſſed record give any ground to turn aſide unto crooked paths; for theſe are clouds of mens own creating, which have ſuch a tendency

to darken the ſame; but we ſee truth in all ages, waited on by error which with any brighter diſcovery thereof, breaks up like a thick fogge; though theſe can never unit, no more then gold and clay can joyne together; and it is clear, the notion of error, were unconceivable, if the truth had not a certainty and real being, nor doeth it conflict with ſuch an adverſary, but for its further triumph; oh if the ſolid perſwaſion of the Scripture, were in earneſt purſued, and mens ſoul once brought under the power and authority of the truth, as that, which is the word and teſtimony of the living God, it would prove a more effectual cure to ſo dreadful a diſtemper of the Church then all the diſputs of the time, (which are of ſpecial uſe alſo) may not Atheiſm be found upon a ſerious inquiry, the great riſe of error, and of mens bold adventuring to make the Scripture of God a ſport of their invention, to make it ſubſervient to their intereſt, and run after ſuch a byaſs, and should it not be for a lamentation, that a humble ſerious inquiry after the truth, under an awful impreſſion of that God whoſe word it is, is this day ſo rare a thing in the World; now this being ſo sharp a trial of the Church, and one of theſe things whereat many pretend to be moſt shaken, though I have in an other part touched it a little, I would adde further ſome few remarks, how clear and expreſs a confirmation of the word even this is, which should more fix & eſtablish theſe who love the truth, 1. It is manifeſt, that no error, or corrupt doctrin aſſaults the Church, but is in ſuch a manner pointed forth, yea by ſo expreſs an oppoſition thereto, in the Scripture, that we may ſee a prophetical forewarning thereof, and of mens endeavour

vour to corrupt and darken such a piece of the truth; it is sure the word is written and in a special way directed to every time of the Church, and to al her after trials, and assaults, is peculiarly suited, by him who knew & did foresee what opposition his truth in after ages should meet with, and in this marvelous record, men may clearly see (if there were such a serious inquiry) that there is no poison or corruption in doctrine which infests the Church, but hath its proper antidot there provided. I must here as to one particular instance say, if I were not perswaded of a determined species of government for the Church under the new Testament (which is clear in the Scripture, holding forth its constitution to be Aristocratick, with a parity amongst the officers of Jesus Christ in the administration of their power, and a subordination of the lesser parts to the greater) I could not shun so clear a remarke, of that expresse prohibition, of any disparity and Lordly prelacy in his house, yea how manifestly the allseeing God, when he was about to found the Christian Church doeth point in such plain terms at this, that we may there read a very direct prediction of that ruin and prejudice it would on this accoumpt sustain in after times; I speak this on no particular intereſt, or from bitternes and prejudice at the persons of any, but have confidence to say, it is from the aw and perswasion of the truth: sure on politick grounds, and with respect to an outvard intereſt, it is easy to judge, that way wants not a perswading bait, if something greater were not to preponderat, and a destroying hook did not wait thereon, which should make the purchase too dear, at the rate of denying Jesus Christ in a piece of his truth, when a confession thereof is called for before men.

2. Doe we not see even in these things, which in that marvellous deepth of error and delusion on mens soul seem most strange, the Scripture thence most exactly confirmed, and in that power and energy which attends it, and is to many matter of astonishment, may discern how these clouds are carried about with a tempest, 2. *Pet*: 2. 17. and driven on by a judicial stroke, and though it is amazing to see at what a rate many are this way turned mad, with a discernable bewitching of their judgment, and a besotting into most strange and absurd extravagancies, yea how tenacious and violent in their way, when silenced with the cleerest discoveries of the truth, yet is not this also witnessed, there is a righteous God giving up to strong delusion, in which Satan is let loose with a remarkable power to deceive. 2. *Thes.* 2. 12. O how dreadful is that stroke which is inflicted on the judgment and reason, which in some respect we may say is greater then that which is on the affections. 3. Finde we not the Scripture by a clear prophetical discovery, point at that influence humane authority, and the patrocini of such, who have a name and reput in the Church, should have on the corrupting the doctrine thereof, and therefore does the Holy Ghost, so particularly guard against the same, and oppose the authority of the written word to the highest pretences of any party; that here an Apostle must not be admitted or have credit to the truths prejudice, not an Angel, yea not a voice from heaven, may oppose it self to this more sure testimony of God in his word. 4. Is it not here even in that great deepth of error we see this truth take place, deceiving and being deceived, how strangly these meet, and by a marvellous stroke, mens judgment made captive to their will, and

and their deliberat acting to deceive others have the same effect on themselves. 5. Thus also is the Scripture made out, where we see how hard it is for men to fix in such a way, or finde land when they are once carried off the truth. and do lanch out in that horrid gulf of error, but seducers wax worse and worse.

Inference. V. The truth of God revealed in the Scripture is in its import not more marvellous and great, then we may say is clear and obvious in the evidence of its verification, which hath every where such a witnes, that there can be no escape from this discovery, but if men will not receive its testimony, they must have it forced on them as their torment, for it is here invention doth fail, and politicks are found too vveak, to ward off some impression of that, which with an awful appearance and authority, does justify it self to the conscience without their consent; nor can this secure them from that lash of invvard terror, which will make these tremble alone, when they seem to have confidence before others; but this advantage hath the truth of her adversaries, that even Atheism must bear a witnes thereto, and against it self, which if men would but weigh in the ballance of sober reason, it should appear a sufficient antidot against its own poison, and a great seal to the Scripture, which would want a special confirmation, if it wanted such an adversary; now to clear it a little more, and thus shut up what hath been on this subject held forth, I must in behalf of the glorious truth of God (which in all ages of the Church did never want some discovery of its accomplishment) attest the reproachers of this time who are so much at work to challenge his unspotted way, and call in question his

faithfulnes, to the weakning of the assent of many thereto, and do appeal them to that tribunal which the great God hath placed in the conscience, if they can without doing violence thereto, and putting forth the eye of reason, withstand the clear evidences of divine truth, and the certainty of its performance, anent which these few I shall here adde.

First. If it be the great prerogative of God, and to him alone belongs, to declare things from the beginning to the end, and hold forth the various and most remarkable events, which should fal out within time, with their proper circumstances, yea to discover the great revolutions of the world through all the ages thereof, when second causes in their remotest tendency thereto could not be discerned, is not this then clear and undenyably true of the Scripture? 2. As to the sure and exact performance of the same. I must make that challenge and attestation, which that great servant of the Lord Joshua, did in such a case, *Jos.* 23. 14, if any thing hath hitherto failed, of all which the Lord hath spoken in the Scripture; or if men can instance, what special prediction, or promise, (which to this day should have taken place in the season thereof) hath miscarred, or turned abortive, what truth wants its seal and confirmation; yea what step of providence, can you point at which does not quadrat, and marvellously accord with the word; I challenge an instance; but this I am sure men must see, there are such things fal out in the event, that are particularly foretold in the Scripture, so strange and marvellous, that in an ordinary way none could have believed, which they now see with their own eyes. 3. Do you not see the written word as a bright

lantern

lantern attend the Church, from the very porch and entry of time, in all her journey, and evidently point at the remarkable times, and revolutions of her case, which have now in a great part gone over her head; yea is it not demonstratively clear, that the sun doth not more truly shine on this terrestrial globe, then the Scripture shineth, and doth illuminat the whole frame and structure of providence; and in all these strange parts which are acted in the world, most certainly takes place, that there is none can walk at random, or by his own counsel direct and steer his course; but though it is marvellous it is sure also, that the innumerable millions of men who are this day upon earth, in all their various motions, are at present fulfilling the determined counsel of God; and their actings (what ever they design therein) must be concentrick with his great end, nor out of that bounds can they possibly move. 4. I must attest the world, if they doe not see, this way of godlines, which seems to day to be every where spoken against, to be that good and old way, in which are the footsteps of the Saints to be found since the beginning, and that it is no new light now brok up in the world; but it is clear, through all ages past, there hath not wanted a continued succession, of these who in this reproached way did serve the God of their fathers; and have sealed the truth, which now from one time, to an other, we finde still delivered off their hands, to the present generation; and I here challenge the greatest Atheists, to which of the Saints can they turn, or whom can they instance of that blessed company, since there was a Church in the earth, who could ever contradict this, or bear an other witnes. 5. Must you not confess there is no such deep, in the heart of man,

or ſo cloſſe and ſubtil a convoy of wickednes there, which is not found out in the Scripture, and there pointed at; and that none can get themſelves hid, or get beyond the reach of this, in theſe things which they are ſure the obſerving world could never know, but the moſt ſecret haunts of their ſoul are unvailed, which from their deareſt friend they have concealed. 6. Can this demonſtration of the Scripture, and ſo manifeſt a witnes thereto be denyed, that whilſt man is a free agent in his actions, and doth therein act ſpontaneouſly, he hath notwithſtanding of this in his own breaſt both a judge, and accuſer, which though within him, doth without his conſent, exerce a power over him, and ſuch an authority which he would, yet cannot decline. 7. I dare atteſt the conſcience of men, who are themſelves ſtrangers to the way of God, if they can ſo far shut their eyes, but they muſt ſee ſerious godlines is a marvellous thing & that there is ſomething here above nature, which by its effects on others, may shew a divine Spirit and power, that whereever it comes makes ſo great a change, and one to exceed an other moſt diſcernably though of the ſame parts, that ſuits and does accommodat it ſelf to the various conditions and employments of men, it puts a ſpecial honor on the greateſt Prince, and does inſtruct the wiſe and prudent, yet will it lodge with the pooreſt artificer in his shop, or labouring man in the field; and does it not alſo appear, that here muſt be a native motion and unconſtrained, from inward principles, when on outward grounds there is not the leaſt incitment, which shews it is a living thing, that hath its diſcernable languishing, and wearing out, and its more vigorous actings, as well as any living man; it is ſtrange the report of this, is

not

not matter of aſtonishment, to bring men once to queſtion, if ſuch an accoumpt as others give of this marvellous thing, religion, can be true, how it is here the Chriſtians joy is ſowen by weeping, and his tears the ſeed whence gladnes of heart breaks up; how ſweet that reſt is which is found in his work and labour; and with his ſowing to the ſpirit, the harveſt then begins, in a preſent reaping, and his laying forth himſelf, with a giving of the heart unto God, does enrich the giver by ſuch a gift; yea that here men ſhould differ ſo much when alone with God and brought near him from what they are at other times, and in theſe retirements of their ſoul, have that diſcovery and conception of this truth, which is not to be found in turning over the voluminous tractats of the greateſt writters. 8. If men have any ſerious reflection, and doe not shut up the bible, can they shun this remark thereof; How well it anſwers the various ſucceſſions of time, and ſo marvellous a variety of things that are ſo many ages diſtant from other, yea that all alongſt there is a gradual diſcovery and breaking up of the goſpel in the ſeveral times of the Church, where it is eaſy to diſcern the antiquity of this excellent record, and ſo great a diſtance of time betwixt the penmen thereof, yet in its compoſure is one entire piece, ſo connex and cloſely knit together, that men may ſee the ſame ſpirit in the whole, and in each part thereof, moving and carrying forward one great deſign. 9. I shall but further adde, if Religion hath a being and reality, which men can not loſe the ſenſe of, and deny, without falling ſo far below reaſon, into the condition of the beaſts, muſt there not be a rule alſo? for it is eaſy to judge in what a ſtrange and monſtrous shape this would ap-

pear, were it left to the choice and arbitrement of men; now let the most professed Atheists turn their eyes through the whole earth, and in a calm, and sober composure of spirit but judge, if there be any thing more absurd, and to astonishment irrational, then that face and appearance religion hath amongst these where this excellent rule of the Scripture is not owned; yea could these subject themselves to such extravagancies and therein turn so mad, without a divine stroke on their judgment and reason, which the righteous God in verification of his word inflicts on such who do even shut their ears, from the report of the truth, the sound whereof goes forth through the earth; and here I challenge men though strangers themselves to serious religion, if at a distance it doth not appear, how great a difference there is betwixt these parts of the world, where the gospel shines in its power, and the rest of the nations.

FINIS.





